

ASOKAN ALPHABET.

𑀅 𑀆 𑀇 𑀉 𑀏 𑀑 𑀓 𑀔 𑀕 𑀖 𑀘 𑀙 𑀚 𑀛 𑀜

अ आ इ उ ए ओ क ख ग घ च छ ज झ ञ

অ আ ই উ এ ও ক খ গ ঘ চ ছ জ ঝ ঞ

a ā i u e o ka kha ga gha cha chha ja jha ña

𑀝 𑀞 𑀟 𑀠 𑀡 𑀢 𑀣 𑀤 𑀥 𑀦 𑀧 𑀨 𑀩 𑀪 𑀫

ट ठ ड ढ ण त थ द ध न प फ ब भ म

ট ঠ ড ঢ ণ ত থ দ ধ ন প ফ ব ভ ম

ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na pa pha ba bha ma

𑀬 𑀭 𑀮 𑀯 𑀰 𑀱 𑀲 𑀳 𑀓𑀸 𑀓𑀺 𑀓𑀻 𑀓𑀼 𑀓𑀽 𑀓𑁂 𑀓𑁄 𑀓𑀁

य र ल व श ष स ह का कि की कु कू के को कं

য র ল ব শ ষ স হ কা কি কী কু কূ কে কো কং

ya ra la va śa ṣa sa ha kā ki kī ku kū ke ko kaṁ

RUMMINDEI EDICT.

𑀤𑁂𑀯𑀸𑀦 𑀧𑀺𑀬𑁂𑀦 𑀧𑀺𑀬𑀤𑀲𑀺𑀦 𑀮𑀸𑀚𑀺𑀦 𑀯𑀻𑀲𑀢𑀺𑀯𑀲𑀸𑀪𑀺𑀲𑀺𑀢𑁂𑀦

देवान पियेन पियदसिन लाजिन वीसतिवसाभिसितेन

দেবান পিয়েন পিয়দসিন লাজিন বীসতিবসাভিসিতেন

𑀅𑀢𑀦 𑀆𑀕𑀸𑀘 𑀫𑀳𑀻𑀬𑀺𑀢𑁂 𑀳𑀺𑀤 𑀩𑀼𑀥𑁂 𑀚𑀸𑀢𑁂 𑀲𑀓𑁆𑀬𑀫𑀼𑀦𑀻𑀢𑀺

अतन आगाच महीयिते हिद बुधे जाते सक्यमुनीति

অতন আগাচ মহীয়িতে হিদ বুধে জাতে সক্যমুনীতি

𑀲𑀺𑀮𑀸 𑀯𑀺𑀕𑀟𑀪𑀻𑀘𑀸 𑀓𑀸𑀮𑀸𑀧𑀺𑀢 𑀲𑀺𑀮𑀸𑀣𑀪𑁂 𑀘 𑀉𑀲𑀧𑀸𑀧𑀺𑀢𑁂 𑀳𑀺𑀤

सिला विगडभीचा कालापित सिलाथभे च उसपापिते हिद

সিলা বিগডভীচা কালাপিত সিলাথভে চ উসপাপিতে হিদ

𑀪𑀕𑀯𑀁 𑀚𑀸𑀢𑁂𑀢𑀺 𑀮𑀼𑀁𑀫𑀺𑀦𑀺𑀕𑀸𑀫𑁂 𑀉𑀩𑀮𑀺𑀓𑁂 𑀓𑀝𑁂 𑀅𑀞𑀪𑀸𑀕𑀺𑀬𑁂 𑀘

भगवं जातेति लुंमिनिगामे उबलिके कटे अठभागिये च

ভগবং জাতেতি লুংমিনিগামে উবলিকে কটে অঠভাগিয়ে চ

SELECT ASOKAN EPIGRAPHS

(With Annotations)

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Firma K. L. MUKHOPADHYAY

CALCUTTA :: 1960

Publishers : Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay
6/1-A, Banchharam Akrur Lane, Calcutta-12

2nd Edition 1960

Printed by Dhananjoy Samanta at Mahendra Press
58, Kailash Bose Street, Calcutta-6

To

The Sacred Memory of my Revered Cousin
the late Babu Bishnu Charan Chakrabarty.

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this book attracted the notice of two most eminent historians. Dr. R. C. Majumdar who did me the honour of reviewing the book in the *Modern Review* suggested that the texts of the inscriptions should be printed in bolder types than the annotations on them. This suggestion has been gratefully accepted and adopted in this edition. Professor Nilakantha Shastri advised me to incorporate within the book translation of the texts of the fourteen edicts of Asoka which were not included in its first edition. This involves a slight deviation from the original scheme of the book which was to give the texts with annotations of "only those edicts of Asoka which tell us of definite events in his career" arranged in the order in which these events took place. Considering, however, the convenience of the reader in having in one handy volume all the inscriptions of Asoka, I have acted upon the suggestion of Professor Shastri and have put in Appendix A of this edition translations of those Asokan inscriptions which had been excluded from the first edition and have also added short explanatory notes where necessary. The translations are mine and are as close to the original texts as possible.

In this edition the English translation by Dr. Umberto Scerrato of the recently discovered bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) Asokan inscription of Kandahar in Afghanistan has been included as Appendix B.

Attempts have thus been made to include in this edition all the results of recent researches on Asokan epigraphs.

All these additions have increased the volume of the book which, it is hoped, will be found more useful by those for whom it is intended.

I am very grateful to the Government of India in the Ministry of Scientific and Cultural Affairs for having granted me permission for reproducing in this edition also Hultzsch's translations of the seventeen annotated inscriptions and to the *Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente* for their very kind permission for incorporating in this book the English translation of the *Bilingual Asokan Inscription* recently discovered by Italian archæologists at Kandahar in Afghanistan and published in Volume XXI of the *Serie Orientale Roma*. I am also deeply grateful to my much esteemed Departmental Head, Professor S. C. Sarkar, M. A. (Cal. *et* Oxon.) for his unfailing encouragement which has made possible the publication of this edition of the book. My thanks are also due to Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay for undertaking its publication.

26th January, 1960 S. B.

EXTRACTS FROM
THE PREFACE OF THE FIRST EDITION

Asoka's inscriptions number thirty-four, each one of which has its own special significance. In selecting eighteen only of such documents for special study I have had in my mind the particular needs of the under-graduate History students of our Universities. The burden imposed by the necessity of reading a variety of subjects prescribed for the Degree course, the unfamiliar nature of the language of the inscriptions, and the volume and abstruseness of the annotations that have to be mastered for their proper appreciation, deter most of the under-graduate students from taking up the study of the inscriptions either in original or in translation. But the inscriptions of Asoka are the earliest of the orginal sources of the history of our country, and some familiarity with them ought to be a *sine qua non* for the prospective graduates in History of our Universities. I have therefore selected only those edicts of Asoka which tell us of definite events of his career and have arranged them not in the order in which the edicts were issued but in the order in which the events they speak of, took place. A study of these select epigraphs will thus enable a young under-graduate not only to form his own opinion of the way in which the Emperor's mind and ideas developed and worked, but also to handle original documents with ease and will thus prepare him for higher Post-Graduate studies.

In my annotations on the selected edicts I have avoided, as far as possible, purely literary criticism and discussion and have mainly tried to explain the historical significance of the lithic statements of the Emperor.

The text of the translations of the seventeen annotated epigraphs are all from Hultzsch's Inscriptions of Asoka (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* Vol. I, New Edition).

All important passages where other scholars differ from him have also been pointed out. Other works on the subject which have been constantly consulted are named in the Bibliography as well as in the body of the book. Though I have not always rigidly followed the judgments of the authorities I have consulted, I frankly confess that I cannot claim much of originality of work, and I owe a very heavy debt of gratitude to all those authors. The idea of compiling such a collection of Asokan edicts with a view to the satisfaction of the needs of those for whom it is intended, has not, I believe, been already anticipated ; and I shall consider my labour amply rewarded if it can inspire at least some of them with a real interest in the study of the original sources of the history of our country.

I am very grateful to the Government of India in the Department of Education, Health and Lands, for having granted me permission for utilizing Hultzsch's translations of the annotated edicts.

1942 S. B.

CONTENTS

			Page
Introduction	...	...	ix—xiv
I			
Rock Edict XIII	...	...	1
II			
Minor Rock Edict I (Rupnath)	...	...	17
II (*Contd.*)			
Minor Rock Edict I (Maski)	...	...	25
III (*Concld*)			
Minor Rock Edict II (Bhabru)	...	...	27
IV			
Rock Edict VIII	...	...	31
V			
Pillar Edict VI	...	...	33
VI			
Rock Edict IV	...	...	37
VII			
Barabar Cave Inscriptions I and II		...	40
VIII			
Rock Edict III	...	...	42
IX			
Rock Edict V	...	...	49
X			
Nigliva Pillar Inscription	...	...	55
XI			
Barabar Cave Inscription III	...	...	57
XII			
Rummindei Pillar Edict	...	...	58

			Page
	XIII		
Pillar Edict IV	...	...	61
	XIV		
Pillar Edict VII	...	...	66
	XV		
Queen's Pillar Edict	...	...	76
	XVI		
Sarnath Pillar Edict	...	...	78

Appendix A

Rock Edicts :		
	I	84
	II	86
	VI	87
	VII	89
	IX	90
	X	92
	XI	93
	XII	94
	XIV	96
Separate Kalinga Edict I		97
Separate Kalinga Edict II		101
Pillar Edicts :		
	I	103
	II	104
	III	105
	V	106
Appendix B		108
Bibliography		111
Abbreviations		112

INTRODUCTION

The sources of our knowledge about Asoka and his activities may be broadly divided into two classes *viz.*, literary and epigraphic. Literary sources comprise the *Divyavadana* and the Ceylonese Chronicles, *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*. The *Divyavadana* is in Sanskrit and occupies an important place in the canonical literature of Northern India. The concluding portion of the *Divyavadana* is known as the *Asokavadana* and it contains an account of Asoka's life and career. The Ceylonese Chronicles are in Pali and they give the Ceylonese version of Asoka's life and activities. None of these works was written by any contemporary of Asoka nor does any of them possess the authority and precision of the Asokan inscriptions. Moreover, they confuse legends with facts and have, therefore, been relegated by all to a secondary importance as sources of our knowledge of Asoka. The epigraphs of Asoka stand, however, on an entirely different footing. They record the very words of the Emperor as well as his thoughts and aspirations. They breathe the spirit of absolute truthfulness and reveal the Emperor in his true colours. The inscriptions of Asoka are, therefore, considered the most authoritative and reliable source of our information about Asoka.

Inscriptions of Asoka have been left engraved on rocks, pillars of stone and in caves. The inscriptions are thus naturally divided into three classes *viz.*, rock, pillar and cave inscriptions. Those on rocks and pillars are, again, sub-divided into two classes. Fourteen inscriptions on rocks form a serially arranged set, and, except at Sopara, wherever one of these fourteen has been found the other thirteen also have been found. Hence these fourteen are called the Fourteen Rock Inscriptions. Some detached inscriptions on rocks have also been found and these are known, presumably on account of their comparative brevity, as the Minor Rock Inscriptions.

Again, seven inscriptions on stone-pillars form a serial and have always been found, with the exception of the seventh, together. On the single pillar (*viz.*, the Delhi-Topra) where the seventh one has been found, it follows the first six and completes the group of seven. Hence these seven inscriptions on pillars are known as the Seven Pillar Inscriptions. Some pillars, again, have been found with single inscriptions containing matters different from those of the Seven Pillar Inscriptions. These are known as the Minor Pillar Inscriptions. Three commemorative edicts found inscribed in the caves of Barabar Hills are known as the Cave Inscriptions. Thus Asokan edicts divide themselves into five classes *viz.*, the Fourteen Rock Edicts, the Minor Rock Edicts, the Seven Pillar Edicts, the Minor Pillar Edicts and the Cave Edicts.

Versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts have been found at Shahbazgarhi in the district of Peshawar, at Mansehra in the district of Hazara, N. W. F. P. (now in West Pakistan), at Kalsi in the Dehra Dun district, U. P. at Girnar, about a mile to the east of Junagarh in the Kathiawar peninsula, at Sopara in the Thanah district of the Bombay Presidency where only a fragment of R. E. VIII has so far been found, at Erragudi in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, at Jaugada in the Ganjam district of the Madras Presidency and at Dhauli in the Puri district of Orissa. At Dhauli and at Jaugada Rock Edicts Nos. XI, XII and XIII have been replaced with two edicts meant specially for that newly conquered region. These two edicts are known as Separate Kalinga Edicts I & II. It is to be observed that the localities where the Rock Edicts have been found, all lay towards the frontiers of Asoka's empire as described in Rock Edict XIII.

Of the Minor Rock Edicts one has been found at Rupnath in the Jubbalpur district, M. P., and a second at Bairat in the Jaipur State. Versions of the first Minor Rock Edict have also been found at Shahasram in the Shahabad district of Bihar, at Bairat in the Jaipur State and at Maski in the

Raichur district of the now defunct Nizam's State, and, also, with large additions, at Siddapura, Jatinga-Rameswar and Brahmagiri, all in the Chitaldrug district of the Mysore State. The Minor Rock Edict II found at Bairat is also known as the Bhabru Edict, as Bhabra is the one considerable town nearest the exact findspot. Versions of the Minor Rock Edicts have also been recently found at Yerragudi in the Kurnool district of the Madras Presidency, at Kopbal in the Nizam's State, at Palkigundu in the same area and at Rajula—Mandagiri in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh.

The Seven Pillar Edicts have been found on a monolithic pillar at Delhi where it was removed by Sultan Firoz Shah Toghlak from a village called Tobra or Topra and which is accordingly known as the Delhi-Topra Pillar. Versions of the first six edicts of this series have been found also on a second monolithic pillar at Delhi which was removed there from Meerut by Sultan Firoz Shah as well as on a monolithic pillar at Allahabad where it is supposed to have been removed by Akbar from Kausambi on the left bank of the Jumna, and on three monolithic pillars at Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurva, all in the Champaran district of Behar. The last three pillars mark the course of a royal road from Magadha to Nepal along which presumably Asoka travelled when going on pilgrimage to the birth-place of the Buddha.

Of the Minor Pillar Edicts one has been found at Sarnath, near Benares. Its variants have been found at Samchi in the Madhya Bharat State and on the Allahabad-Kosam Pillar. A second Minor Pillar Edict has been found at Rummindei in the Basti district, U. P., and a third at Nigliva, only thirteen miles from Rummindei.

The three Cave Inscriptions have all been found in the Barabar Hills near Gaya in Behar.

In 1932 archæologists of Afghanistan discovered a stone inscription in Pul-i-Duranta near Laghman in Afghanistan.

Laghman is on the north bank of the Kabul river, a little above Jelalabad and has been identified with Lampaka mentioned in Sanskrit literature as a part of the north-western border-land of India. The inscription is in Aramaic and it mentions the name of Devanampriya. It has been attributed to Asoka and has been edited by W. B. Henning in the Bulletin of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. XIII, 1949-50, pp. 80-88. The inscription is mutiliated and there are large gaps. The contents, as they are now preserved, give no new imformation about Asoka, though its findspot proves the inclusion of Jelalabad within Asoka's Empire.

Very recently a short bilingual (in Greek and Aramaic) edict of Asoka has been found by Italian archæologists at Kandahar in Afghanistan. It has been edited and published in *Serie Orientale Roma* Vol. XXI (*poste* Appendix B for the Englsh translation of the text with notes).

There is a very good map of India showing the find-spots of the edicts in Smith's Early History of India as well as in his Oxford History of India.

The inscriptions are in different conditions of preservation at different places. The texts of the best preserved versions only have been utilised. But even in the best-preserved copies words, and sometimes even sentences, are missing. The missing links have been supplied by scholars who have devoted long laborious years to the study of Asokan epigraphy, and all such restorations are shown in the texts within parentheses.

All the inscriptions of Asoka found in India excepting the Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts, are written in the Brahmi script which was written from left to right and from which have been derived the modern Devanagari and most of the other Indian alphabets. At Shahbazgarhi as well as at Mansehra Asoka used, presumably for the benefit of the non-Indian frontier peoples, the

Kharosthi script which was written from right to left as is done in writing Persian, Arabic and Urdu. The Jelalabad inscription is in Aramaic and the Kandahar inscription is in Greek and Aramaic. Evidently Asoka desired that his words should reach all classes of his subjects and used all such alphabets as were in use amongst them. Our forefathers, however, had forgotten the Brahmi as well as the Kharosthi scripts long before Hiuan Tsang visited India in the seventh century, and, when in the third quarter of the fourteenth century Sultan Firoz Shah Toghlak had the two Asoka pillars removed to Delhi from Topra and Meerut, there was no Indian scholar who could read the inscriptions on them. We owe the decipherment of the inscriptions of Asoka to James Prinsep who first read and translated the Delhi-Topra Edicts in 1837. Prinsep was an officer employed in the Calcutta Mint and the study of bilingual coins giving the names of kings in Greek and Indian letters supplied him with the key to the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts. The knowledge was at first necessarily imperfect and Prinsep has himself related (JASB, 1887, 460 ff) how his recognition of the dental s from the study of some coins from the Kathiawar peninsula was followed within a couple of days by his reading of the word *danam* in Brahmi and how within a few minutes of this discovery he became possessed of the whole alphabet which was then tested by being applied to the Delhi-Topra Pillar Edict.

A study of the insriptions of Asoka enables us to reconstruct as follows an account of his career, dated according to regnal years counted from his coronation, the relevant inscriptions being mentioned within brackets :

(*i*) Asoka conquered Kalinga in the eighth year. (R. E. XIII).

(*ii*) He was converted to Buddhism in the ninth year. (M. R. E. I & II).

(*iii*) He visited Bodh-Gaya in the tenth year. (R. E. VIII).

(*iv*) He issued edicts for first time in the twelfth year. (P. E. VI.).

(*v*) He held in the same year public shows for promoting Dharma. (R. E. IV).

(*vi*) He gave the Ajivikas two caves the same year. (C. E. I & II).

(*vii*) He ordered tours by his officers the same year. (R. E. III).

(*viii*) He appointed *Dharma-mahamatras* in the thirteenth year. (R. E. V).

(*ix*) He doubled the stupa of Konakamana in the fourteenth year. (N. P. E.).

(*x*) He gave the Ajivikas a third cave in the nineteenth year. (C. E. III).

(*xi*) He visited Lumbini-grama and the stupa of Konakamana in the twentieth year. (Rum. P. E. & N. P. E.)

(*xii*) He published the first six Pillar Edicts in the twenty-sixth year. (P. E. IV).

(*xiii*) He issued the seventh Pillar Edict in the twenty-seventh year. (P. E. VII).

(*xiv*) He recorded gifts by his second queen some time after the twenty-sixth year. (Queen's Pillar Edict).

(*xv*) He condemned schismatics probably some time after the twenty-seventh year. (Sarnath P. E.).

Other events of his career cannot be dated and the date of his death also is not known.

In the following pages the above-mentioned inscriptions of Asoka are discussed in the chronological order as stated above.

Appendix A contains translations of the fourteen other edicts of Asoka and Appendix B the English translation of the recently discovered bilingual Kandahar Rock inscription of Asoka.

SELECT ASOKAN EPIGRAPHS

I

ROCK EDICT XIII

CONQUEST OF KALINGA—EIGHTH YEAR.

Rock Edict XIII records the earliest known and perhaps the most important event of Asoka's life. This was the conquest of Kalinga which took place eight years after his coronation. This edict also tells us of his conversion to, and zeal for, Buddhism, of his missionary and evangelical activities within his empire and out of it in the neighbouring Hellenistic countries ; and it concludes with an exhortation to his sons and grandsons to forswear war. Its Shahbazgarhi version reads as follows :

1. When King Devanampriya Priyadarshin[1] had been anointed eight years[2] (the country of) the Kalingas[3] was conquered by (him).

2. One hundred and fifty thousand in number were the men who were deported thence, one hundred thousand in number were those who were slain there, and many times as many as those who died.

3. After that, now that (the country of) the Kalingas has been taken, Devanampriya (is devoted) to a zealous study of Dharma,[4] to the love of Dharma, and to the instruction of people in Dharma.

4. This is the repentance of Devanampriya on account of his conquest of (the country of) the Kalingas.

5. For, this is considered very painful and deplorable by Devanampriya, that, while one is conquering an unconquered (country), slaughter, death and deportation of people (are taking place) there.[5]

6. But the following is considered even more deplorable than this by Devanampriya.

7. (To) the Brahmanas or Sramanas or other sects or house-holders, who are living there, (and) among whom the following are practised: obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders, proper courtesy to friends, acquaintances, companions, and relatives, to slaves and servants,[6] (and) firm devotion,—to these then happen injury or slaughter or deportation of their beloved ones.

8. Or, if there are then incurring misfortune the friends, acquaintances, companions, and relatives of those whose affection (for the latter) is undiminished, although they are (themselves) well provided for, this (misfortune) as well becomes an injury to those (persons) themselves.

9. This is shared by all men and is considered deplorable by Devanampriya.

10. And there is no country where these two classes (*viz.* the Brahmanas and Sramanas), do not exist, except among the Yonas[7] and there is no place in any country where men are not attached to some sect.

11. Therefore even the hundredth part or the thousandth part of all those people who were slain, who died, and who were deported at that time in Kalinga, (would) now be considered very deplorable by Devanampriya.

12. And Devanampriya thinks that even (to one) who should wrong (him), what can be forgiven is to be forgiven.

13. And even (the inhabitants of) the forests[8] which are (included) in the dominions of Devanampriya, even those he pacifies (and) induces to meditate, *i.e.*, converts.

14. And they are told of the power (to punish them) which Devanampriya (possesses) inspite of (his) repentance, in order that they may be ashamed (of their crimes) and may not be killed.

15. For Devanampriya desires towards all beings abstention from hurting, self-control, (and) impartiality in (case of) violence.

16. And this conquest is considered the principal one by Devanampriya *viz*, the conquest by Dharma[9].

17. And this (conquest) has been repeatedly won by Devanampriya both here and among all (his) borderers[10] even as far as at (the distance of)

six hundred *yojanas*[11] where the Yona king named Antiyoka (is ruling), and beyond this Antiyoka, (where) four-4-kings (are ruling), (*viz.*, the king) named Turamaya, (the king) named Antikini, (the king) named Maka, (and the king) named Alikasuddara[12], and towards the south (where) the Chodas and Pandyas (are ruling), as far as Tamraparni.

18. Likewise[13] here in the King's territory among the Yonas and Kambojas, among the Nabhakas and Nabhitis, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, among the Andhras and Pulidas—everywhere (people) are conforming to Devanampriya's instruction in Dharma.

19. Even those to whom the envoys[14] of Devanampriya do not go, having heard of the duties of Dharma, the ordinances, (and) the instruction in Dharma of Devanampriya, are conforming to Dharma and will conform to it.

20. This conquest, which has been won by this everywhere,—a conquest (won) everywhere (and) repeatedly,—causes the feeling of satisfaction.

21. Satisfaction has been obtained (by me) at the conquest by Dharma.

22. But this satisfaction is indeed of little (consequence).

23. Devanampriya thinks that only the fruits in the other (world) are of great (value).

24. And for the following purpose has this rescript on Dharma[15] been written (*viz.*), in order

that the sons and great-grandsons (who) may be (born) to me, should not think that a fresh conquest ought to be made, (that), if a conquest does please them, they should take pleasure in mercy and light punishments, and (that) they should regard the conquest by Dharma as the only (true) conquest.

25. This (conquest bears fruit) in this world (and) in the other world.

26. And let there be (to them) pleasure in the abandoment of all (other aims), which is pleasure in Dharma[16].

27. For this (bears fruit) in this world (and) in the other world.

NOTES

1. Asoka's Royal Title :—Devanampriya Priyadarshi is the name or title which Asoka generally adopted for himself in the inscriptions. The etymological meaning of the word Devanampriya is "dear to gods", and that of Priyadarshin is "he who glances amiably". Later Sanskrit grammarians and lexicographers assign to Devanampriya the meaning of a "fool". But according to Patanjali Devanampriya is a form of benedictory address. In section 1 of R. E. VIII. (*poste* ch. IV) the term Devanampriya is used in the sense of a king, and in the *Mahavamsa* Tissa, the Ceylonese contemporary of Asoka, is called Devanampriya. The term must have been, therefore, known as a complimentary title in the days of the Mauryas. Of the two terms, Devanampriya and Priyadarshin, the latter has never been used in the inscriptions as an adjective; it has always been used as a substantive. It should, therefore, be taken as a second name for Asoka. Dr. Smith translated the terms into "His Sacred and Gracious Majesty" (EHI, 186) while Dr. Bhandarkar prefers to render them into

"King Priyadarshin, Beloved of the Gods". (Asoka, 6-8). Priyadarshin may also be interpreted to mean "one who looks on (all) as dear", or "one who looks after the welfare (of all)". As, however, one of the two terms is an honorific title and the other is a proper name, it is better to use the terms as they are without attempting at any translation.

Identification :—In 1837, soon after Prinsep had deciphered the Brahmi script of Asoka's edicts, (vide *ante*, Introduction) George Turnour identified the Devanampriya Priyadarshin Maharaja of the inscriptions with the third Maurya king, Asoka. (JASB, 1837, 790 ff). This identification was based on the following speculative evidence :

(*i*) The Ceylonese Chronicles often refer to Asoka as Priyadarshin.

(*ii*) In the Bhabru Edict Priyadarshin is described as a king of Magadha.

(*iii*) In section 13 of R. E. V. (Shahbazgarhi and Girnar versions) Pataliputra is referred to as the capital of King Priyadarshin and the Sarnath R. E. also refers to Pataliputra.

(*iv*) The Greek kings mentioned in section 17 of R. E. XIII could have been contemporaries of Asoka alone.

In 1919, however, the discovery of the Maski Inscription (ref. *poste*, ch. III) which opens with the terms "Devanampriyasa Asokasa" definitely proved the correctness of the identification.

2. The reference is to "current regnal years". (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 10 & 350 n 6 and *poste* P. E. V. App. A.). Kalinga was therefore conquered in the eighth year after Asoka's coronation. The Ceylonese Chronicle *Mahavamsa* (Geiger's Translation, pp. 27-28) states that the death of Asoka's father Bindusara was followed by a war of succession amongst Asoka and his one hundred brothers, born of different mothers, ninety-nine of

whom were killed before Asoka was formally crowned at Pataliputra four years after he had assumed sovereignty and two hundred and eighteen years after the death of the Buddha. Dr. Bhandarkar holds that in view of references to Asoka's brothers in his inscriptions (*vide* R. E. V. *poste*, ch. IX) and of the fact that three inscriptions of Asoka's grandson, Dasaratha, are dated from the latter's coronation, "there is no good reason to think that any long interval such as that of four years elapsed between Asoka's coronation and his assumption of the reins of government". (*Asoka*, 9-10).

The System of dating events by regnal years, as adopted in this and other inscriptions of Asoka, is, it must be confessed, of little real assistance in fixing dates ; for none of the events of Asoka's career which are dated by regnal years in his inscriptions, can be accurately dated unless we can first of all fix the date of his accession. But, as Dr. Bhandarkar observes, (*Asoka*, 51) "we cannot possibly arrive at the date of Asoka's accession with any accuracy." [ref. below, *note*, 12(a)].

3. The Kalingas were known to Pliny who lived in the first century of the Christian era. He says that the Kalingas lived nearest the sea, and their king was protected by a strong army. (*Pol. Hist.*, 250-51). Their kingdom extended from the river Vaitarani in the north to Mahendragiri (Eastern Ghats) in the south and from the Amarakantaka Hills in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east. It thus comprised the modern province of Orissa, the district of Ganjam and probably also that of Vizagapatam. Its capital Dantapura was a Buddhist holy place whence a holy relic, a tooth of the Buddha, was later on transported to Ceylon. (Bagchi, *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, 74-75).

Cause of the conquest :—Kalinga was the solitary conquest of Asoka and we do not know the reason for which it was conquered. According to Pliny, Kalinga was an independent country at the time of Chandragupta and Asoka probably conquered it for the double purpose of satisfying the natural martial instincts of a powerful king and of removing a "thorn

by the side of his dominions", and would have followed it up with other conquests if he had not been converted to Buddhism. (*Pol. Hist.*, 250-51).

4. *Dhrama* is the original word used. Elsewhere in the edicts it is called *Dhamma*. Both are equivalents of the Sanskrit Dharma and have been translated by Smith as "Law of Piety", (EHI, 184), and by Hultzsch simply as "morality". Indian scholars, however, prefer to retain the word as it is without attempting at any translation, because the Dharma which is so frequently mentioned in the edicts, was neither a law of piety nor morality, but it was Buddhism as understood by Asoka ; and this is clearly shown by the Calcutta-Bairat Rock Edict. (ref. *poste*, ch. IV.) In the texts of the translations of the edicts the word, morality, has therefore been always replaced by Dharma.

The importance of this passage lies in the fact that it proves that Asoka was converted as a result of the horror and repentance inspired in his mind by the slaughter of the Kalinga War. (ref. *poste*, M.R.E.I., *note*, 1).

5. In sections 5-8 of this edict Asoka sets forth his arguments against war. These are (i) combatants are killed or deported, *i.e.* kept in captivity in foreign countries, (*ii*) this causes suffering to the families of the combatants, who practise admirable virtues like obedience to high officers, to parents, and to elders, courtesy to friends as well as to slaves and firm devotion ; and (*iii*) the sufferings of the bereaved families bear hard upon those members of the general public who love them, or, are dependent on them.

6. A distinction is clearly made between slaves or *dasas* and paid servants or *bhatakas*. Proper treatment to both is inculcated in many edicts *e.g.*, R. E. IX & XI and P. E. XII. The edicts thus contradict the testimony of Megasthenes that Indians did not employ slaves. (On the question of slavery in ancient India, refer Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, i. 271 ; and Monahan, *Early History of Bengal*, 96-100 & 164-165).

7. Yona is equivalent of Sanskrit Yavana. Both are derived from the Persian Iauna meaning the Ionians, that is, the Greeks. (Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 416-417). The Greeks referred to in this passage were the subjects of the Asokan Empire and are therefore to be distinguished from the Greeks living in the independent Hellenistic countries mentioned in section 17 of the inscription. The recent discovery at Kandahar of an Asokan inscription written in Greek and Aramaic scripts shows that amongst the subjects of Asoka there were so many Greeks that the Emperor thought it necessary to issue for their benefit an inscription in Greek. (ref. App. B).

8. The original used is *atavi*. It is the name given to the region extending "from Baghelkhand almost upto the sea-coast of Orissa" which included Rupnath and Sahasram where copies of Minor Rock Edict I have been found. (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 47).

9. Conquest by Dharma (or *Dharmavijaya*) meant conversion to Buddhism. It was opposed to military conquest. In section 24 of this edict Asoka expresses a desire that his sons and grandsons should prefer conquest by Dharma to conquest by force. The conquest of Kalinga marked an epoch in the history of the Mauryas. Militarism was replaced by pacification and religious propaganda. The effect of this change was, as Dr. Bhandarkar observes, "politically disastrous though spiritually glorious". "By creating apathy to militarism it weakened the Central Government and thus prepared the way for the inroads of the Greeks and of the barbarians like the Sakas and Kushanas. Spiritually, however, Asoka's policy resulted in the establishment of Buddhism as a world-religion." (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 258-61 ; *Pol. Hist.*, 304).

10. Sanskrit *antas* means bordering dominions ; here the inhabitants of bordering dominions which were independent are referred to. This term has been used in the same sense in R.E.II and M.R.E.I. This passage along with those that follow helps us in fixing the boundaries of Asoka's empire. The Greek king Antiochus II of Syria on the north-west and the Choda

and Pandya kings of southern Deccan having been referred to in the edict as borderers, Asoka's empire must have included "the whole of India except the southern extremity of the peninsula" which was ruled by Choda, Pandya, Satiyaputra and Keralputra kings. To the north-west the empire extended up to the Hindu-Kush beyond which lay the dominions of Antiochus II of Syria. (*Pol. Hist.*, 253-60 ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 40-48) The recent find in Afghanistan of a bilingual inscription of Asoka confirms the inclusion of Afghanistan within the Asokan empire. Inscriptions do not tell us how far Asoka's empire extended to the north-east. The circumstance that Bengal is not mentioned in any Asokan inscription coupled with the fact that no Asokan edict or relic has yet been discovered in Bengal, suggests the inference that Bengal lay outside his empire. But this inference is negatived by the testimony of classical writers who state that Bengal was a part of Chandragupta's dominion (Monahan, *Early Hist. of Bengal*, ch. i.) as well as by the testimony of Hiuan Tsang who found Asokan stupas in Samatata (Lower Bengal), in Tamralipti (Tamluk), and in Karnasuvarna (North-west Bengal). (Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, ii, 187-193). There is, however, nothing to show that Assam was included within the Asokan Empire.

11. *Yojana* literally means the distance up to which a fully loaded cart can be drawn by a pair of bullocks. It is also used in the sense of a day's march for the royal army. One *yojana* was equal to 14 miles. (Mookerji, *Asoka*, 188, *n* 4.).

12. (*a*) Asoka's Greek contemporaries :—Historically it is a most important statement, for if the kings referred to can be correctly identified, and, if the statement can be correlated with the date of the issue of the edict, it will fix the date of Asoka's accession. Antiyoka, Turamaya, Antikini, Maka and Alikasuddara are stated to have been the five contemporary Hellenistic kings in whose dominions Asoka had succeeded in making converts to Buddhism. Scholars agree with Lassen that Antiyoka is to be identified with Antiochus II of Syria (261-246 B.C.), Turamaya with Ptolemy II of Egypt (287-247 B.C.), Antikini with Antigonus of Macedonia (276-239 B.C.), and

Maka with Magas of Cyrene (300-250 B.C) ; but opinion is divided on the identification of Alikasuddara who might have been either Alexander of Epirus (272-255 B.C.), as Lassen holds, or Alexander of Corinth (252-244 B.C.), as Bloch suggests. From the manner in which the Greek kings are mentioned it is obvious that they were all alive when the inscription was issued. The last date up to which all these five Greek contemporaries of Asoka were alive, was either 255 B.C. or 252 B.C., accordingly as Alikasuddara is identified with the Alexander of Epirus or of Corinth. If, in the circumstance, the number of the regnal year of Asoka when this edict was issued could be definitely ascertained, the date of Asoka's accession would also have been fixed. But scholars, again, differ on the date of the issue of the edict. Hultzsch follows Senart in holding that R. E. XIII was not issued earlier than thirteen years after Asoka' coronation. (CII. I., xxxi.). Dr. Bhandarkar, on the other hand, agrees with H. K. Deb in thinking that R. E. XIII was issued after the twenty-seventh year of Asoka's reign. (*Asoka*, 48-51 & 286-'89). This uncertainty about the date of the promulgation of R. E. XIII renders futile all efforts at arriving at the definite date of Asoka's accession. (For the dates of the edicts refer *poste* P. E. VI, *note*, 1.).

(*b*) Asoka's activities in Greek Countries ;—The claim that Asoka makes in this passage (section 17 of R. E. XIII) of having converted to Buddhism many inhabitants of Hellenistic countries, has been resentd by some European scholars. Rhys Davids thought that the claim was "mere royal rhodomontade" and was evidence of Asoka's own vanity. The Professor based his argument mainly on the two following grounds :—(1) Asoka did not send missionaries to the Greek countries ; and (2) the Greeks were too self-complacent to accept the teaching of a "barbarian" king. *(Buddhist India, 298-299)*. But in addition to the epigraphic evidence as to the efforts of Asoka to preach Dharma in the Hellenistic countries, tradition as preserved in Buddhist literature records that at the conclusion of the Third Buddhist Council which had met under Asoka's patronage at Pataliputra, missionaries were sent to Gandhara and to the

Greek countries, and, that a Greek monk named Dharmarakkhita was sent to the Aparanta (Western Frontier provinces). It further records that Maharakkhita, the monk that was sent to the Greek countries, made many converts there. (Geiger, *Mahavamsa,* ch. xii). There is no good reason for doubting the truth of these traditions and we may thus be assured that Buddhist missionaries were really sent to the Greek countries in Asoka's time and they succeeded in making converts there. Further, Asoka tells us in R. E. II that he established hospitals for men and beasts in the Hellenistic countries and also supplied them with medicines and herbs. These humanitarian activities of a "barbarian" king must have touched the sensitive minds of the Greeks and could not but have evoked in them a sympathy for the religion that made Asoka transcend the barriers imposed by distance and racial and cultural differences. The second argument about the self-complacency of the Greeks which prevented them from accepting an alien religion, is unfounded. As early as the sixth century B.C., long before Alexander the Great brought the Greeks in close touch with the Indians whom the Greeks considered to be "the best of the barbarians", many Greeks had accepted the Orphic religion which was of Eastern origin. The Eleusinian mysteries which later on became so popular in Athens and the Pythagorean system which received so many adherents in Magna Grecia, were both, more or less, offshoots of the Orphic religion. As a matter of fact, though Greek philosophy ultimately prevailed, mysticism and revelation always tempted the Greeks exceedingly. (Bury, *Hist. of Greece,* i, 334-345). Buddhism being a higher type of religion than Orphic worship would, therefore, make a much stronger appeal to the Greeks in the Hellenistic countries. There is, moreover, ample evidence to show, as Sylvain Levi pointed out as far back as 1891, that many Greeks did adopt Buddhism soon after Asoka's time. First, Menander, who, according to Smith, (EHI, 118), was the Greek contemporary of Pushyamitra, was converted to Buddhism, as related in the *Milindapanha.* If, as Dr. Tarn contends, the presence of the Greek deity, Athena, in Menander's coins tends to disprove the story of his conversion (*The Greeks*

in Bactria and India, 269), the legends in his coins in which he calls himself a *dhramika*, or a follower of the Dharma, that is to say Buddhism, equally tends to prove his faith in Buddhism. Secondly, Alexander Polyhistor (80—60 B.C.) mentions that the *Sramanas* were the priests of the Bactrians. Thirdly, inscriptions in the cave-temples at Karli, Kanheri, Junnar and Nasik —all in Western India—record gifts to the Buddhists by Greeks named Irila, Chita, Idagidat and Dhenukakata and show that the donors must have been Buddhists. Fourthly, Dutthagamani, king of Ceylon in the second century B.C., founded a Great Stupa in his territory, and to the opening ceremony there came, along with Bhikshus from different countries, 30,000 Bhikshus from Alasandra (Alexandria), the the Greek town beyond the Hindu Kush, under a Greek monk named Mahadharmarakkhita. (Ref. Levi, *Le Bouddhisme et les Grecs—Rev. l'historie des religions*, xxiii, 1891, pp. 36-39). Further, Buddhism was well established, as Dr. Bagchi has shown, in Bactria in the first century B.C., and it was from the Bactrian Court that Buddhist missionaries along with the Sacred Texts were sent to the Chinese Emperor in 2 B.C. Buddhism was established in other parts of the Iranian world in the first century of the Christian era and a Parthian prince who was a Buddhist appeared in China in 148 A.D. (*Le Canon Bouddhique*, I, p. viii & p. 8). The prevalence of Buddhism in the Hellenistic countries of Western Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era is also proved by the similarity between Buddhism and Christianity on subjects like confession, fasting and celibacy of the priesthood (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 160-173) as well as by the testimony of Hiuan Tsang as to the existence of Budddhist monasteries in Persia and that of Alberuni as to the prevalence of Buddhism in western Asia long before his time. (*Pol. Hist.* 519-522). The credit for having started Buddhism on its victorious career in the Hellenistic countries must be given to Asoka, as he is the earliest and the only king we know of, who claimed to have made converts to Buddhism amongst the Greeks. No definite evidence, however, has yet been found to show that Buddhism was actually spread, beyond Bactria and Syria, into Egypt and Cyrene in Africa as well as into Macedonia

and Corinth (or Epirus) in Greece, as claimed by Asoka in section 17 of R. E. XIII.

13. The Southern Borderers of Asoka :—Just as Antiochus II of Syria and the other other Greek kings named in section 17 ruled on the north-western border of Asoka's empire, so on the southern border of his empire ruled the kings af the Chodas, and of the Pandyas and of Tamraparni. R. E. II inserts between the Pandyas and Tamraparni two other states *viz.*, Satiyaputra and Keralaputra. The Choda or the Chola country comprised the districts of Trichinopoly and Tanjore. Its capital was Uragapura or Uraiyur, that is, Old Trichinopoly. The Pandya country comprised Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevally districts. Its capital was Madura. Tamraparni is Ceylon, and not the river of the same name in the Tinnevally district, as was suggested by Smith. Asoka's contemporary on the throne of Ceylon was king Devanampriya Tissa who was converted to Buddhism by the Mauryan Prince-monk Mahendra. Satiyaputra has not yet been definitely identified. It might have represented modern Travancore. "It is really very difficult", observes Dr. Bhanharkar, "to fix the exact boundaries of the southern states referred to by Asoka, but it seems that they met one another and also those of his empire, in the Chitaldrug district of Mysore" where three copies of Minor Rock Edicts have been found. (*Pol. Hist.*, 271-274 ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 41-46 ; Smith, EHI, 194 ; Hultzsch, CII, I, xxxix.)

14. Tribal Peoples in Asoka's dominions :—Having mentioned how Asoka had made converts in the independent Hellenistic and Indian states that bordered on his dominions, the inscription proceeds to state the names of some of the peoples within Asoka's own dominions amongst whom also he had succeeded in securing many converts to Buddhism. The peoples thus mentioned are the Yonas and the Kambojas, the Nabhakas and the Nabhitis, the Bhojas and the Pitinikas, and the Andhras and the Pulidas. The Yonas are undoubtedly Greeks, but, as opposed to the Yonas already mentiond in section 17, these were under the direct rule of Asoka. The

Yonas and the Kambojas, along with the Gandharas, Rashtikas and Pitinikas are also mentioned in R. E. V and are there associated with the western borderers of Asokan empire. Accordingly Hultzsch thinks (CII, I, xxxix) that "the Yonas formed a small state on the north-western frontier". Dr. Bhandarkar places them "between the rivers Kophen and the Indus". (*Asoka*, 30-31). This is rather strange as the Kophen (or Kabul) river runs practically perpendicularly to the Indus. Dr. Jayaswal identifies it with the city-state of Nysa where Alexander had found a Greek colony. (*Hindu Polity*, 147.) The despatch of a mission to the Yona country is also supported by the ***Mahavamsa*** which states that after the Third Council Thera Maharakkhita was sent there. (*Geiger*, p. 82). The recent discovery at Kandahar of an Asokan edict in Greek (vide App. B.) definitely places the Yonas or Greeks in the Kandahar region. The Kambojas lived in "Rajaur near Punch in Kashmir". (*Pol. Hist.*, 253). Dr. Tarn, however, would put them in Kafiristan whose capital was Kapisa. (*The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 170). The Nabhakas and the Nabhitis (also called Nabhapamtis of Nabhaka in the Kalsi version of the edict) have not yet been definitely identified and they might have lived, as Dr. Bhandarkar suggests, "somewhere between the North-West Frontier Province and the western coast of India". (*Asoka*, 33.) The Bhojas and the Pitinikas perhaps correspond to the Rastikas and Pitinikas of R. E. V. Like the Nabhakas they too have not yet been definitely identified and located. Dr. Bhandarkar suggests that Pitinika is not a tribal name, but is a "mere adjective denoting a ruler of the second rank". Associated as it is in the edict with other tribal names, it has heen rightly taken by the majority of scholars as a tribal name. The Bhojas and Pitinikas might have lived, as Hultzsch thinks, in the western part of Asokan empire (CII, I, xxxix), or in the Berar and Maharashtra respectively, as Dr. Ray Chaudury believes. (*Pol. Hist*, 259). Again, Paithan sounds so similar to Pitinikas that that region might have been, as Woolner suggests, the home of the Pitinikas. (A.T.G., II, 113). The Andhras were the inhabitants of the region between the Krishna and the Godavari which is

called Andhradesha even in modern times. According to Megasthenes the Andhras possessed a military force second only to that of Chandragupta Maurya. Lastly, the Pulidas are generally identified with the Pulindas of the Puranas which invariably associated them, as Dr. Ray Chaudhury points out, with the Vindyan region. (*Pol. Hist.*, 258.). In the edicts also they are coupled with the Andhras and must have been their neighbours.

15. Envoys (or *Dutas*, as in the original) were ambassadors who appear to have been maintained by Asoka not only in the frontier kingdoms but also in the courts of distant princes who too were presumably represented in Asoka's court by their diplomatic agents. Dr. Bhandarkar's suggestion that the passage refers to the propagation of Buddhism in China (*Asoka*, 160) is untenable because it was not before 125 B.C. that the first report about India reached the Chinese court and connection between China and India was not established before the first century B.C. (Bagchi, *India and China*, pp, 1-2). The Ceylonese chronicle *Mahavamsa* tells us that at the conclusion of the Third Buddhist Council two monks named Sona and Uttara were sent to preach the faith in Suvarnabhumi. (Geiger, p. 83 and 86). Suvarnabhumi has been identified with Lower Burma. (*Pol. Hist.*, 275).

16. *Dharma-lipi* is the name by which Asoka calls his edicts. They were more than mere inscriptions to him. They were issued for the religious welfare and earthly happiness of the people.

17. The meaning of the passage, as it is, is not clear. Dr. Bhandarkar's rendering is :—"May attachment to Dharma develop into attachment to all kingdoms", meaning that the descendants of Asoka should think of attaching the bordering kingdoms by religious propaganda leading to *Dharmavijaya* or conversion to Buddhism. (*Asoka*, 332, *note* 10.)

II

MINOR ROCK EDICT I

CONVERSION OF ASOKA—NINTH YEAR

The conquest of Kalinga was followed by the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism. Of his conversion, of the stages of the development of his zeal for Buddhism and of his efforts for its success, Asoka speaks in the Minor Rock Edict I.

The Rupnath version of the M. R. E. I reads as follows :

1. Devanampriya speaks thus.

2. Two and a half years and somewhat more (have passed) since I am openly a *Sakya*[1].

3. But (I had) not been very zealous.

4. But a year and somewhat more (has passed) since I have visited the *Samgha*[2] and have been very zealous.

5. Those gods who during that time had been unmingled (with men) in Jambudvipa have now been made (by me) mingled with them[3].

6. For this is the fruit of zeal.

7. And this cannot be reached by (persons of) high rank (alone) (but) even a lowly (person) is able to attain even the great heaven if he is zealous.

8. And for the following purpose has (this) proclamation been issued, (that) both the lowly and the exalted may be zealous, and that even my borderers[4] may know (it) (and) that this same zeal may be of long duration.

9. *For this matter[5] will (be made by me to)* progress, and will (be made to) progress considerably.

10. And cause ye this matter to be engraved on rocks where an occasion presents itself.

11. And (wherever) there are stone pillars here[6] it must be caused to be engraved on stone pillars.

12. And according to the letter of this (proclamation) you must dispatch (an officer) everywhere, as far as your district (extends).

13. (This) proclamation was issued by (me) after I had spent the night (in prayer).

14. 256[7] (nights) (had then been) spent in prayer.

The Brahmagiri version has an additional para. which runs as follows :

"Thus says Devanampriya : obedience must be rendered to mother and father, likewise to elders ; compassion must be shown to animals ; the truth must be spoken ; the same moral virtues must be practised. In the same way the pupil must show reverence to the mother, and one must behave in a suitable manner towards relatives. This is one ancient rule, and this conduces to long life. Thus one must act. Written by Chapada the writer."

NOTES

1. (*a*) **Asoka's Religion :—Section 2 of this edict is most interesting for two reasons. First, it shows that Asoka was a**

Sakya or, as he puts it in the Maski version (vide poste, p. 27) of the edict, a Buddha-Sakya, that is to say, a Buddhist. In the Shahasram version of the edict he calls himself an Upasaka, that is, a lay Buddhist worshipper. Further, his confession of faith and reverence to the Buddhist Trinity, *viz.*, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha in the Calcutta-Bairat Rock Inscription (*vide poste*, ch. III), his visit to Bodh-Gaya described in R. E. VIII (*poste*, ch. IV), his visit to the Buddha's birth-place related in the Rummindei Pillar Edict (*poste*, ch. XII), his care for, and visit to, the stupa of the mythical Buddha Konakamana described in the Nigali-Sagar Pillar inscription (*poste*, ch. X), and his anxiety for the maintenance of the integrity of the Samgha as shown by the Sarnath Pillar edict (*poste*, ch. XVI), definitely prove that Asoka was a Buddhist. Dikshitar's suggestion (*Woolner Commemoration Volume*, 1940, p. 69 ff) that Asoka professed and preached the Sanatana Dharma entirely ignores the above evidence without assigning any reasons. (For the characteristics of Asoka's Dharma refer *poste* P. E. VII, *notes* 18 & 21.)

(b) Date of his conversion :—Secondly, section 2 suggests a date for the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism. The Ceylonese chronicle *Mahavamsa* places the conversion of Asoka in the fourth year after his coronation, that is to say, four years before the conquest of Kalinga (Geiger, 29-31). Prof. Mookerji thinks that the two succeeding passages in this edict support the statement of the *Mahavamsa*. He, therefore, places the conversion of Asoka three and a half years before the Kalinga War. He takes the "two and a half years and somewhat more" that intervened, as Asoka affirms here, between his conversion and public profession of faith as a Buddhist, as separate from, and anterior to, the "year and somewhat more" that, according to section 4 of this edict, passed between Asoka's visit to the Samgha and his development of zeal as a Buddhist. Thus Asoka became zealous in the cause of Buddhism more than three and a half years after his conversion ; and, as Asoka confesses in R. E. XIII, section 3, it was after the conquest of Kalinga that he became devoted to a zealous study, love and

propagation of Buddhism, so it is clear, thinks Prof. Mookerji, that the conquest of Kalinga took place three years and a half after Asoka's conversion. (*Asoka*, 17-18). Hultzsch, however, rightly takes the two periods of time mentioned above as inclusive. In this view Asoka became zealous in the propagation of Buddhism a little more than two years and a half after his conversion, and the first fruit of his zeal was the publication of inscriptions which, as P. E. VI states (*poste*, ch. V.), were first issued twelve years after his coronation. Thus his conversion must have táken place "a little more than two years and a half" before the twelfth regnal year, that is to say, in the ninth year, or a year after the conquest of Kalinga. This view has been accepted by the general body of scholars. (Hult., CII, I, xlv-xlvi ; *Pol. Hist.*, 268, *note* ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 77-87 ; CHI, I, 495-6 ; Smith, EHI, 165).

3. Religion preached by Asoka :—A third question connected with the religion of Asoka is whether the *Dharma* that he preached in his edicts was Buddhism. It is noticeable that Asoka in his edicts never refers to the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and Nirvana which are the fundamental principles of Buddhism as taught by Gautama Buddha. Rather in some of his edicts [*e.g.*, Rupnath version of Minor Rock Edict I as well as Rock Edicts VI and IX and the Dhauli version of the first Separate Kalinga Edict (vide *poste* App. A)] he refers, not in consistence with Buddhist philosophy, to *svarga* or heaven as the reward for following his Dharma. The omission of all references to the fundamental Buddhist principles of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and Nirvana and the positive reference to *svarga* as the goal of religious endeavours have raised doubts as to whether the *Dharma* preached by Asoka in his edicts was Buddhism. Further, there is nothing particularly Buddhistic in his various benefactions and acts of public utility, in the releasing of prisoners on the anniversaries of his coronation day nor in granting three days' respite to prisoners sentenced to death. "All these measures were", as Hultzsch observes, (CII, I, p. xlix), "certainly prompted by his

care for his subjects, but they do not characterise him as a Buddhist reformer."

In the Brahmagiri version of Minor Rock Edict I Asoka himself enunciated Dharma in the following words :

"Obedience must be rendered to mother and father, likewise to elders ; compassion must be shown to animals ; the truth must be spoken. In the same way the pupil must show reverence to the teacher, and one must behave in a suitable manner towards relatives."

These instructions are also amplified in Rock Edicts III, IX, XI, XIII and in Pillar Edict VII where liberality to Brahmanas and Sramanas and kind treatment towards slaves and servants are also declared to be parts of Dharma. As Senart pointed out long ago (IA. 1891, pp. 264-265), these ideas are quite in agreement with the principles taught in the well-known Buddhist text *Dhammapada*. Moreover, obedience to parents, reverence for teachers, suitable treatment towards relations and friends, kindness to servants and slaves and liberality to Brahmanas and Sramanas were emphasized by Gautama Buddha himself as essential virtues to be practised by the Buddhists who were householders in the *Sigalovada-Sutta* comprised in Digha-Nikaya which is one of the earliest of the Buddhist scriptures. Unlike any other Brahmanical or Jaina text the *Sigalovda-Sutta* enumerates and recommends just those courses of conduct which Asoka repeatedly tried to instill into the minds of his subjects and thus proves that the Dharma that Asoka preached was Buddhism. Further, in Rock Edict XII Asoka preached universal toleration by exhorting his people to refrain from over-praising their own sect as well as from condemning unduly the sects of the other people. This conception of toleration is also clearly enunciated in the Buddhist scripture called *Sutta-nipata* which inculcates the cultivation of the virtues of *samyama* and *suddhi* in language which suggests that Asoka must have taken that conception from the Buddhist scripture *Sutta-nipata*. In view of these facts no reasonable doubt can be entertained, as Bhandarkar observes,

(Asoka, p. 113) that Asoka was indebted to a Buddhist scripture for his grand exhortation that truth is one and is taught by all sects and that real purity depends upon self-restraint. Lastly, Buddhism was meant for monks as well as for laymen. The Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and Nirvana as the goal of human efforts—were all meant for the Buddhist monks and nuns to practise and aspire after. As regards the layman, his ideal was heaven, as Gautama himself preached according to the Buddhist scripture, *Majjhima-Nikaya,* where he is recorded to have said repeatedly that a virtuous householder is born in the next existence as a god in one of the heavens. Thus the promise repeatedly held out by Asoka that the practice of the Dharma which he preached in his edicts would be rewarded with heavenly bliss in the next existence was entirely based on Buddhism and the Dharma that he inculcated in his edicts was Buddhism to which alone he applies the term Dharma in the Calcutta-Bairat Rock edict. (vide *poste* ch. III).

4. Dr. Bhandarkar interprets the passage differently. He thinks that Asoka did not simply visit the Samgha but he lived with the Samgha for some time. (*Asoka,* 369-71). Smith mentions I-tsing's reference to an image of Asoka in the garb of a Buddhist monk in support of the view that Asoka actually joined the Holy Order for some time. (EHI, 168).

5. This is a very intriguing passage that still awaits an adequate explanation. Jambudvipa is India. The interpretation of the passage largely depends upon the meaning of one crucial word, *viz., misa.* Senart held that it meant false and that the passage stated that those gods who had so long been considered true have been proved to be false. Following Senart, the late MM. H. P. Shastri read in this passage the boast of Asoka that "those who were regarded as gods on earth have been reduced into false gods". And the Mahamahopadhyaya proceeded, "If it means anything it means that the Brahmanas who were regarded as *Bhudevas* or gods on earth had been shown up by him." (JASB, 1910, 259-262). Sylvain Levi, however, showed that the word *misa* in the original

did not mean, as Senart had suggested, false, but it meant 'mingled". This interpretation of the word has now been generally accepted and the rendering of the passage, as we have it in the text above, leaves no justification for Shastri's criticism. But there still remains the difficulty as to what exactly Asoka meant by saying that he had mingled gods with men. Hultzsch thinks that "gods" here mean effigies of gods which, as stated in R. E. IV., Asoka showed to his subjects. (CII, I, 168). This explanation does not appear to be very satisfactoiy (*vide poste*, ch. VI, *note* 3.). Dr. Bhandarkar says that "what Asoka means is that by leading men in the path of Dhamma they have become so virtuous that they were commingled with gods." (IA, 1912, p. 170 and *Asoka*, 140-41 & 371-72). This is too high a claim for the success of only one year's propagandist activity. Thomas' view that the passage means that Asoka brought the Brahmana gods to the knowledge of the wild peoples (CHI, I, 505) is untenable, because Asoka could have had no interest in such a course of action. Prof. Mookerji suggests as many as three different interpretations (*Asoka*, 111-112), showing thereby that none of the three is entirely satisfactory. It, therefore, still remains an enigma why Asoka who does not use the word *deva* or god anywhere else in his edicts except in the title Devanampriya, nor confesses his faith in any one of them, should consider the mingling of gods with men such an object of exultation.

6. The borderers were, as stated in Rock Edict XIII, Antiochus II of Syria in the north-west and the Chodas and Pandyas in the south. (*ante*, p. 4).

7. *i.e.*, Buddhist propaganda. (Hult., CII, I, 168).

8. 'Here' means "in my territory", (*ibid.*, 169).

9. The passage is one of the knottiest in Asokan edicts. In 1893 Buhler took the number as stating a date after the Nirvana of the Buddha. (IA, 209ff). In 1910 Thomas showed that in the Shahasram version of the edict the figure 256 is

preceded by the word *lati*, *i. e.*, night. This led scholars to give up Buhler's interpretation and to adopt that given in the text above. Recently, however, Prof. Mookerji has rendered the passage thus :—"And this message has been caused to be proclaimed 256 times by the king on tour" (*Asoka*, 113) ; while Dr. Bhandarkar's rendering is—"The discourse was made when there had elapsed 256 (years)" which have to be reckoned from the *Nirvana*. (*Asoka*, 370 & 372). Assuming that 256 is, as suggested by Dr. Bhandarkar, a date which has to be counted from the *Nirvana* of the Buddha, we can arrive at no satisfactory result. The date of the *Nirvana* cannot be fixed, as Smith observes, with certainty. (EHI, 50). Two dates *viz.*, 543 B.C. and 487 B.C., are considered to be the most probable amongst the variety of dates assigned for the death of the Buddha ; and Smith is more inclined for accepting the former. (*Ibid.*, 49-50). Assuming 543 B.C. to be the correct date, the M.R.E. I would be dated 543 – 256 = 287 B.C. And as the edict could not have been issued earlier than the twelfth year after Asoka's coronation the latter event would be dated 287 + 12 = 299 B.C. Again, as Asoka's accession took place four years earlier than his coronation, the former would have to be dated 299 + 4 = 303 B.C. Lastly, the reigns of Chandragupta and Bindusara covered 52, 51 and 49 years according to the Ceylonese, Burmese and Puranic traditions respectively. (Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, xli.). Taking 50 as the mean number, if the accession of Asoka be dated 303 B.C. that of Chandragupta would have to be dated fifty years earlier, that is to say, in 353 B.C., which is absurd, for it is universally accepted that Chandragupta became king soon after the departure of Alexander from India in 325 B.C. Similarly, the assumption of 487 B.C. as the date of the *Nirvana* will lead to 297 B.C, as the date of Chandragupta's accession which also is as impossible a date as 353 B.C. Thus the number 256 in M.R.E.I has, as Thomas says, no bearing upon Asokan chronology. (CHI, I, 503). Hultzsch's interpretation of the passage as in the text above appears to be more in keeping with the context of the inscription which undoubtedly reads like a record of the exultation of Asoka on his religious activities.

II

MINOR ROCK EDICT I—(*Concluded*)

MASKI VERSION—DEVANAMPRIYA IS CALLED ASOKA

A version of the M.R.E. I has been found, as stated above, (*ante* pp. 6-7) at Maski. It states within a shorter compass the same facts that are related in the Rupnath version of M.R.E. I. (*ante* p. 18 ff). The Maski Edict has in addition the unique distinction of being the only inscription in which the royal author is called not only Devanampriya but also Asoka. It thus finally settles the question of the identity of Devanampriya Priyadarshi Raja with Asoka. This edict is not, however, so well preserved as the Rupnath copy and large spaces in it have to be filled up by reference to the latter.

The Maski Edict runs thus :

1. (A proclamation) of Devanampriya Asoka[1].

2. Two and a half years (and somewhat more have passed) since I am a Buddha-Sakya[2].

3. (A year and) somewhat more (has passed) since I have visited the *Samgha* and have shown zeal.

4. Those gods who formerly had been unmingled (with men) in Jambudvipa, have now become mingled (with them).

5. This object can be reached even by a lowly (person) who is devoted to morality.

6. One must not think thus,—(*viz.*) that only an exalted (person) may reach this.

7. Both the lowly and the exalted must be told "If you act thus, this matter (will be) prosperous and of long duration, and will thus progress to one and a half"[3].

NOTES

1. In all other edicts the King is generally referred to as *Devanampriya Priyadarshi raja*. In this edict Devanam-priya is combined with Asoka, the Puranic and literary name of the successor of Bindusara. This settles the question of the identity of the author of the inscriptions with the third Maurya king, Asoka.

2. *Buddha-Sakya* signifies more clearly than the mere *Sakya* in the Rupnath version (*ante*, p. 20), Asoka's devotion to the Buddha, the sage of the Sakyas. It thus definitely proves that Asoka was a Buddhist.

3. That is, increased one and a half times.

III

MINOR ROCK EDICT II

ASOKA CONFESSES HIS FAITH IN BUDDHISM

That Asoka had become a convert to Buddhism is placed beyond doubt by the Minor Rock Edict II. As has already been mentioned, this edict is also called the Bhabru Edict. Hultzsch calls it the Calcutta-Bairat Rock Inscription on account of the circumstance that it was found at Bairat in the Jaipur State and is now preserved in Calcutta by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It records Asoka's confession of faith in the Buddhist Trinity and it further recommends, to the attention of the faithful, seven texts all of which have been identified from the Buddhist scriptures. This edict and the Sarnath Pillar Edict have been called "sectarian edicts" by Bhandarkar as these edicts, unlike the other edicts, do not contain any instruction for the general public. (*Asoka*, 88).

The Minor Rock Edict II reads as follows :

1. The Māgadha King Priyadarshin[1], having saluted the *Samgha*[2] hopes they are both well and comfortable.

2. It is known to you, Sirs, how great is my reverence and faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, (and) the *Samgha*[3].

3. Whatsoever has been spoken by the blessed Buddha, all that is well spoken.

4. But, Sirs, what would indeed appear to me (to be referred to by the words of the scripture) : thus the true Dharma will be of long duration that I feel bound to declare.

5. The following expositions of the Dharma, Sirs, *viz.*, (1) the *Vinaya-samukasa*, (2) the *Aliya-vasa*, (3) the *Anagata-bhayas*, (4) the *Muni-gathas*, (5) the *Moneya-sutta*, (6) the *Upatisapasina*, and (7) the *Laghulovada* which was spoken by the blessed Buddha concerning falsehood[4].—I desire, Sirs, that many groups of monks and (many) nuns may repeatedly listen to these expositions of the Dharma and may reflect (on them).

6. In the same way both laymen and laywomen (should act).

7. For the following (purpose), Sirs, I am causing this to be written, (*viz.*), in order that they may know my intention.

NOTES

1. In the inscriptions the king is generally referred to as Devanampriya Priyadarshi. Here we have one of those rare examples where Asoka is referred to in an inscription simply as Priyadarshi. Here the king is further called the Māgadha, that is, of Magadha. This helps his identification with Asoka.

2. *Samgha* refers, Dr. Bhandarkar thinks (*Asoka*, 101-2), to an assembly of Buddhist monks who gathered in the Third Council which, the *Mahavamsa* says, met at Pataliputra in Asoka's reign. (*Vide poste*, ch. XVI). But in view of the absence of all direct reference in the inscriptions to the Council it is better to hold with Hultzsch that *Samgha* here refers to "the Buddhist Clergy".

3. These are the *tri-ratnas* or three jewels of the Buddhists, and a confession of faith in these three is a part of the creed of the Buddhists. This confession of Asoka's faith in the

Buddha, the Dharma and the Samgha coupled with the seven Buddhist texts which he recommends for study by the Buddhist monks and nuns definitely establishes the identity of Asoka's Dharma with Buddhism.

4. All the seven texts mentioned here have been identified with one or other of the *Suttas* which contain the teachings of the Buddha to his disciples. The *Vinayasamukasa* has been identified with the *Dhamma-cakkapoouattana sutta* which is the principal sermon of the *Vinay-Pitaka*. *The Aliya-vasa* is the same as the *Sangiti-Suttanta* and *Dasuttara-Suttanta* of the *Digha Nikaya*. The *Anagatabhaya* is in the *Anguttara Nikaya*. The *Munigatha* is the same as the *Muni-Sutta* in the *Sutta-nipata*. The *Moneyasutta* is in the *Anguttara Nikaya*. The *Upatisapasina* is the same as the *Sariputta-Sutta* in the *Suttanipata*. The *Laghulovada* is the same as the *Lahulovada* in the *Majjhima Nikaya*.

Asokan edicts are generally intended for the people at large ; but this inscription (M.R.E. II) appears to have been intended particularly for monks and nuns who are recomended by Asoka to read the seven texts mentioned above. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the first text mentioned is the *Vinayasamukasa* (*Descipline par excellence*) which deals with discipline. The second text viz the *Aliyavasa* (*Noble States of Living*) states how a monk is to act for his own purification and spiritual advancement and asserts that it is the mind of the monk which is his real guard. Thirdly, the *Anagatabhayas* (*Fears to Come*) warns the monk against the failure to cultivate his own body, character, mind and insight without any of which the monk cannot be an efficient instructor. The fourth text, the *Munigatha* (*Songs on a Muni*) details the virtues and merits that must be possessed by a *Muni* or sage. The fifth text, the *Moneya-Sutta* (*Discourses on the State of a Saint*) describes the threefold restraints on body, mind and speech that a monk must practise if he wanted to be a *Muni* or saint. The sixth text, the *Upatisapasina* (*Questions of Upatisa*) lays down the rules that a

monk must follow in his daily activities in order to live the ideal life. Lastly, the *Laghulovada* (*Instruction to Lahula i.e.*, Rahula) describes how all the merits of a monk who tells the smallest lie, are wasted. (Shastri, B. S., *Buddhist Texts as Recommended by Asoka.*)

IV

ROCK EDICT VIII

ASOKA'S VISIT TO BODH-GAYA—TENTH YEAR

Ten years after his consecration Asoka visited Bodh-Gaya. This is referred to in R. E. VIII. The Girnar version of the edict reads as follows :

1. In times past kings[1] used to set out on pleasure[2] tours.—

2. On these (tours) hunting and other such pleasures were (enjoyed).

3. But when king Devanampriya Priyadarshin had been anointed ten years, he went to Sambodhi[3].

4. Therefore these tours of Dharma (were undertaken).

5. On these (tours) the following takes place, (*viz.*) visiting Brahmanas and Sramanas and making gifts to them, visiting the aged and supporting (them) with gold, visiting the people of the country, instructing (them) in Dharma, and questioning (them) about Dharma, as suitable for this (occasion).

6. This second period[4] (of the reign) of king Devanampriya Priyadarshin becomes a pleasure in a higher degree.

NOTES

1. The Girnar and Dhauli versions have 'kings', while the Kalsi version has "Devanampriyas". Thus Devanampriya appears to have been used as an equivalent of the word king.

2. The pleasure-trips (or *vihara-yatras*) of the predecessors of Asoka were attended with hunting and other diversions pleasurable to the senses. Asoka tells us in section 5 of this edict that he replaced such pleasure-trips with tours of Dharma (or *Dharma-yatras*) which were attended with the following works of piety :—

(*i*) visiting Brahmanas and Sramanas and making gifts to them,

(*ii*) visiting the aged and distributing money among them,

(*iii*) meeting the general people, and

(*iv*) preaching Buddhism to them.

The Rummindei Pillar Edict (*poste*, Ch. XII) records how twenty years after his coronation Asoka went on a tour of Dharma to Lumbini where the Buddha was born. But the first of such tours was, as stated in this edict, to Bodh-Gaya in the tenth year. He must have made many other such tours.

3. Sambodhi here means the spot where the Buddha attained to perfect knowledge. (Hult., CII, I, 15 ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 321-22). This was Bodh-Gaya.

4. Asoka makes here a distinction between two periods of his life, *viz.*, (*i*) that before his conversion which occupied the first nine years of his reign when he used to go on pleasure-trips, and (*ii*) that after his conversion extending from the tenth year of his reign till his death. During this period he went on tours of Dharma. Asoka preferred the second to the first. Dr. Bhandarkar translates the passage differently thus :— "This great delight that (springs) from it is the extraordinary luck of king Priyadarshin, Beloved of the gods".

V

PILLAR EDICT VI

FIRST ISSUE OF EDICTS BY ASOKA—TWELFTH YEAR.

In the twelfth year after his coronation Asoka took four important measures, *viz.*, (*i*) he issued edicts for the first time; (*ii*) he caused R. E. IV to be written; (*iii*) he bestowed two caves on the Ajivikas and (*iv*) he ordered his officers to set out, every five years, on complete tours for the propagation of Buddhism. Pillar Edict VI tells us of the first publication of the edicts, Rock Edict IV of the public shows of edifying objects, the two Barabar Cave Inscriptions of his gifts to the Ajivikas and Rock Edict III of his insistence on quinquennial tours by his officers.

Pillar Edict VI was itself issued in the twenty-sixth year. It, however, records how twelve years after his coronation Asoka first issued the edicts and the hopes and the purpose thereof. It runs as follows:

1. King Devanaṁpriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

2. (When I had been) anointed twelve years, rescripts on Dharma were caused to be written by me[1] for the welfare and happiness of the people, (in order that), not transgressing those (rescripts) they might attain a promotion of Dharma in various respects.

3. (Thinking): "thus the welfare and happiness of the people (will be secured)", I am directing my attention not only to (my) relatives, but to those who are near and far, in order that I may lead them

to happiness, and I am instructing (them) accordingly.

4. In the same manner I am directing my attention to all classes.

5. And all the sects[2] have been honoured by me with honours of various kinds.

6. But this is considered by me (my) principal duty, *viz.*, visiting (the people) personally.

7. (When I had been) anointed twenty-six years,[3] this rescript on Dharma was caused to be written by me.

NOTES

1. The Chronology of the Edicts : In section 2 of the edict we are told that Asoka issued his edicts for the first time in the twelfth year after his coronation. What was the earliest edict of Asoka—is a question that now arises naturally. This is, however, a very difficult question to answer. First, some time must have passed between the drafting and the engraving of the inscriptions. So the assertion in an inscription that it was written in a certain year of the king's reign is not enough to prove that it was also engraved in that year on rocks and pillars situated at long distances from his capital and from one another. Secondly, inscriptions on the same rock, following one another in close succession, refer to differently dated events, *e.g.*, R. E. V records the appointment of *Dharmamahamatras* in the thirteenth year after Asoka's coronation. Again, R. E. VII records Asoka's visit to Sambodhi (Bodh-Gaya) in the tenth year while R. E. XIII tells us of the conquest of Kalinga in the eighth year after Asoka's coronation. Thirdly, P. E. VII which was issued in the twenty-seventh year, is generally considered to contain a summary of Asoka's

missionary and benevolent activities up to the date of its issue. It does not at all refer to Asoka's missionary activities in the Hellenistic countries which form so important a feature of R. E. XIII. The presumption, it has been held, is thus raised that Asoka's missionary activities in Hellenistic countries took place after the issue of P. E. VII, that is to say, after the twenty-seventh year of Asoka's reign. R. E. XIII which records these activities must have, therefore, been issued after P. E. VII. (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 50, n). But this inference, based as it is on an *argumentum ex silentio*, can hardly be considered convincing. Further, none of the Fourteen Rock Edicts records an event that took place later than the thirteenth year of Asoka's reign. Lastly, R. E. IV is expressedly stated to have been written in the twelfth year after Asoka's coronation. Then, are we to assume that Asoka had some inscriptions written as early as the twelfth year but delayed the issue thereof until after the twenty-seventh year of his reign for some unknown and inexplicable reasons ? In view of these circumstances, we can hardly accept Dr. Bhandarkar's opinion (*Asoka*, 289) that the Pillar Edicts were engraved first ; these were followed by the Minor Rock Edicts and the Fourteen Rock Edicts came last.

As none of the incidents referred to in the Fourteen Rock Edicts is dated later than the thirteenth year after Asoka's coronation ; as one of them, *viz.*, R. E. IV, is expressedly stated to have been written in the twelfth year ; and, as all of them form one *ensemble* it may be reasonably inferred that these were issued in, or soon after, the thirteenth year after Asoka's coronation. Again, as the Minor Rock Edict I, copies of which have been found at Rupnath, Shahasram and Maski and at several other places in Mysore and Andhra Pradesh "speak of inscriptions on rocks and pillars as a task which was intended to carry out, and not as a *fait accompli*", and as these "contain the first elements of Asoka's Dharma which we find more fully developed in his rock and pillar edicts," the Minor Rock Edict I should be considered, as Hultzsch suggests, "as the earliest of all the Asoka inscrip-

tions". (CII, I, xliv). The chronological order of the issue of the inscriptions would thus appear to have been as follows :

First, Minor Rock Edict I found at Rupnath, Shahasram, Maski and in several other places in Mysore and Andhra Pradesh.

Secondly, the Fourteen Rock Edicts.

Thirdly, the Rummindei and the Nigali Pillar Edicts.

Fourthly, the first Six Pillar Edicts.

Fifthly, the Seventh Pillar Edict.

Lastly, the Kausambi and Sarnath Pillar Edicts could not have been issued before the first Six Pillar Edicts (*vide poste*, Ch. XVI). The Bhabru Edict is of uncertain date.

2. How words have changed their meanings since the time of Asoka is clearly illustrated by the original word, *pasamda*. In modern times the word *pasamda* means a sinful man or an unrighteous man. Asoka used this word always in the sense of a sect. In R. E. XII (*poste*. App. A) he condemns equally immoderate praising of one's own sect and blaming of other sects. This passage is also a proof of the toleration of Asoka.

3. P. E. VI itself was issued in the twenty-sixth year after Asoka's consecration.

VI

ROCK EDICT IV

PUBLIC SHOWS OF EDIFYING OBJECTS—TWELFTH YEAR.

How by the twelfth year after his coronation Asoka had turned the "sound of drums" into the "sound of Dharma" by holding public shows of edifying objects, is related in R. E. IV. Section 2 of the edict clearly states that it was written when Asoka had been anointed twelve years.

The Girnar version of the edict reads as follows :

1. In times past, for many hundreds of years, there had ever been promoted the killing of animals and the hurting of living beings, discourtesy to Brahmanas and Sramanas.

2. But now[1], in consequence of the practice of Dharma on the part of the king Devanampriya Priyadarshin, the sound of drums has become the sound of Dharma[2] showing the people representations of ærial chariots, representations of elephants, masses of fire and other divine figures[3].

3. Such as they had not existed before for many hundreds of years, thus there are now promoted, through the instruction in Dharma on the part of king Devanampriya Priyadarshin, abstention from killing animals, abstention from hurting animals, courtesy to relatives, courtesy to Brahmanas and Sramanas, obedience to mother (and) father, (and) obedience to the aged.

4. In this and many other ways is the practice of Dharma promoted.

5. And king Devanampriya Priyadarshin will ever promote this practice of Dharma.

6. And the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of king Devanampriya Priyadarshin will promote this practice of Dharma until the æon of destruction (of the world), (and) will instruct (people) in Dharma, abiding by Dharma, (and) by good conduct[4].

7. For this is the best work, *viz.*, instruction in Dharma.

8. And the practice of Dharma is not (possible) for (a person) devoid of good conduct.

9. Therefore promotion and not neglect of this is meritorious.

10. For the following purpose has this been caused to be written, (*viz.*, in order that) they[5] should devote themselves to the promotion of this practice, and that the neglect of it should not be approved (by them).

11. This was caused to be written by Devanampriya Priyadarshin (when he had been) anointed twelve years[6].

NOTES

1. As the concluding section of the edict expressedly states that it was written in the twelfth year after Asoka's coronation, so the activities referred to in this inscription must have taken place by that year of the Emperor's reign. We

are thus to infer that the sound of war-drums was turned into the sound of Dharma by the twelfth regnal year of Asoka.

2. The drums which were previously sounded to call people to the colours, now called them to public exhibitions of edifying objects which were held by the king's order who hoped that such shows would promote Buddhism amongst the people. The "drum thus became the proclaimer of Dharma". (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 130).

3. The edifying objects that were exhibited to the people are mentioned here. These were chariots, elephants, masses of fire, and other divine figures. Hultzsch thinks (CII, I, xlv & p. 7, *n*. 7) that Asoka had these things in his mind when he claimed that he had mixed gods with men. (*vide* M. R. E. I., *ante*, Ch. II). To think that Asoka believed that such shows mixed gods with men is to deny him any credit for common sense. A chariot or a "column-supported palace", an elephant, that is, a "well-caparisoned, white, celestial elephant", and, fire or "a resplendent complexion" are, as Dr. Bhandarkar points out, some of the kinds of rewards that awaited a pious Buddhist in his next life. Asoka, therefore, showed to his people representations of these objects with the result that they were both amused and inspired to live righteous lives. (*Asoka*, 130-'1 & 143-'4).

4. Asoka desires that his successors should promote the cause of Buddhism not simply by making arrangements for instructing the people in the religion but also by living their lives as sincere Buddhists. By their conduct they should be examples to their subjects.

5. *i.e.*, the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of Asoka.

6. It is a very definite statement regarding the date of the edict. (*vide ante*, Ch. V, VI).

VII

THE BARABAR CAVE INSCRIPTIONS

ASOKA'S GIFTS TO THE AJIVIKAS—TWELFTH YEAR.

In two caves in the Barabar Hill there are two inscriptions which record the gift of two cave-temples to the Ajivikas by Asoka in the twelfth year after his consecration.

First Cave Inscription

"By King Priyadarshin, (when he had been) anointed twelve years, this Banyan cave was given to the Ajivikas"[1].

Second Cave Inscription

"By King Priyadarshin, (when he had been) anointed twelve years, this cave in the Khalatika mountain[2] was given to the Ajivikas."

NOTES

1. The Ajivika sect was founded by Gosala, a contemporary of the Buddha and of Mahavira. The beliefs of the sect are expounded in a book called the *Samanna-phala Sutta*. The *Bhagavati Sutra* also tells us a great deal about the principles of Gosala, the founder. The Ajivikas did not believe in human effort and they held that conditions of all human beings were caused by an inexorable fate. Theirs was "a thorough-going determinism denying the free will of man and his moral responsibility for any so-called good or evil." (Das Gupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, I, 79). They are generally believed to have been a non-Brahmanical sect. Dr. Bhandarkar, however, thinks that there were two orders of

the Ajivikas, one Brahmanical and the other non-Brahmanical. In any case, the Ajivikas were a non-Buddhist sect and Asoka's gifts to such a sect bear testimony to his toleration. (Barua, *Hist. of Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, Ch. XXI ; *Pol. Hist.*, 266-'7 ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 177-8 & 357-'8). Prof. Mookerji suggests that the tradition that the preceptor of the paternal family of Asoka's mother, Dharmā, was an Ajivika saint named Janasana, explains Asoka's patronage of the sect. (*Asoka*, 3).

2. The hills stand about fifteen miles north of Gaya. There are seven caves in these hills, four of which are associated with Asoka. The remaining three, known as the Nagarjuni group, contain inscriptions of Asoka's grandson, Dasaratha. The hills were known as Khalatika Hills in the time of Asoka. In Kharavela's time these hills came to be called Gorathagiri Hills. Later on these were known as Pravaragiri Hills. In modern times that part of the hills in which the Asokan caves are situated, is known as the Barabar Hills ; while the other part, where the cave-inscriptions of Dasaratha have been found, is called the Nagarjuni Hills.

VIII

ROCK EDICT III

ASOKA ORDERS HIS OFFICERS TO GO ON TOURS—TWELFTH YEAR.

Rock Edict III tells us how in the twelfth year after his coronation Asoka ordered his officers to set out on quinquennial tours for preaching and propagating Buddhism. The inscription is thus very interesting because (*i*) it records the designations of the principal officers of Asoka, and (*ii*) it shows how the administrative machinery of the state was utilised for the purposes of religious propaganda. This, we may be sure, resulted in the inevitable undermining of administrative efficiency.

The Girnar version of R. E. III reads as follows :

1. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

2. (When I had been) anointed twelve years, the following was ordered by me.

3. Everywhere in my dominions the *Yuktas*[1], the *Rajukas*, and the *Pradeshikas* shall set out on a complete tour (throughout their charges) every five years for this very purpose, (*viz.*) for the following instruction in Dharma as well as for other business.

4 Meritorious is obedience to mother and father, liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives, to Brahmanas and Sramanas is meritorious. Abstention from killing animals is meritorious.

Moderation in expenditure (and) moderation in possessions is meritorious.

5. The Council (of *Mahamatras*) also shall order the *Yuktas* to register (these rules) both with (the addition of) reasons and according to letter[2].

NOTES

1. *Yuktas*, *Rajukas* and *Pradeshikas* are the three classes of officers referred to in this passage. The last section of this edict refers to a fourth class of officers, called the *Mahamatras*, and to their Council. Besides these four classes of officers Asoka's inscriptions refer to the following nine other classes of officers—*Kumaras* (Dhauli Separate Edict), *Aryaputras* (M.R.E. I, Brahmagiri), *Pulisa* or *Purusha* (P.E. I), *Pativedaka* (R. E. VI), *Vachabhumika* (R. E. XII), *Lipikara* (R. E. XIV), *Duta* (R. E. XIII), *Ayuktas* (Separate Kalinga Edict) and *Karanakas* (M. R. E., Yerragudi). A study of the functions of these thirteen classes of officers gives us an idea of the administrative system of Asoka.

(*i* & *ii*) *Kumaras* and *Aryaputras* were princes of the blood who were entrusted with the administration of important provinces like those of Taxila and Avanti. Rudradaman's inscription at Junagarh which says that the Yavana-raja Tushaspa was the governor of Gujrat in Asoka's time, proves that some of the provinces were administered by governors who might have been vassal-chiefs or successful officials who had risen very high. The provincial governors were helped, and, it would appear, also controlled by a class of high officers called *Mahamatras*. We may thus hold that the highest executive power in a province lay not alone with the Governor but with the Governor-in-Council. [Hult. CII, I, xl ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 51-57 ; *Pol. Hist.*, 261. For further discussion on the Council ref. *below*, n. 2(*b*)].

(*iii*) The term *Mahamatra* is used in Buddhist literature in the sense of 'a minister'. In Asokan inscriptions, however, it denotes officers with varied functions. For example, Minor Rock Edicts of Brahmagiri and Siddapura show that *Mahamatras* were placed in charge of districts and were subordinate to the provincial Governor and his Council which was composed presumably of senior *Mahamatras*. Rock Edicts III and IV show that *Mahamatras* formed a Council and received orders directly from the King to whom also they were directly responsible. The first Separate Dhauli Edict shows that the *Mahamatras* of Tosali and Samapa exercised judicial functions and were, therefore, called *Nagara-vgavaharaka* or *Nagaraka*. Thus they were like modern City-Magistrates. Again, the second Separate Edict at Dhauli shows that some *Mahamatras* were in charge of the inhabitants of the border districts of the empire. Such *Mahamatras* were known, as P. E. VII shows, as *Anta-Mahamatras i.e.*, Wardens of the Marches. P. E. VII further shows that there were *Mahamatras* to supervise different sects like the Buddhists, Brahmanas, Ajivikas and Jains and also to control women. Lastly, Asoka created, as he states in R. E. V, a special class of *Mahamatras* for the propagation of Buddhism. These were called *Dharma-Mahamatras*. The *Mahamatras* were, therefore, very high officials who were entrusted with various kinds of responsible consultative, administrative and judicial duties. They appear to have formed the Asokan counterpart of the modern Indian Civil, now called Administrative, Service. (Hult. CII, I, xl ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 60-63 ; *Pol. Pist.*, 262).

(iv) Next in importance to the *Mahamatras* were two classes of officers *viz.*, the *Rajukas* and the *Pradesikas*. The *Rajukas*, or *Lajukas*, are referred to in this edict as well as in P. E. IV and VII in which their functions are set forth in details. (*poste*, Ch. XIII & XIV). The *Pradesikas* are mentioned only in R. E. III, but their status and functions are not clearly described. There has, therefore, been much difference of opinion as to the meaning of the term. Buhler thought that the term meant a "vassal prince" ; Kern, "a provincial

governor" ; Smith, "a district officer" ; Thomas, a "revenue and police officer", Hultzsch, a "provincial high officer", and Bhandarkar, a "head of *pradesa* or Division or Province". In R. E. III, *Yuktas*, *Rajukas* and *Pradesikas* are mentioned one after the other. From the circumstance that the *Rajukas* were undoubtedly higher officers than the *Yuktas* it may be inferred that the three classes of officers have been mentioned there in the ascending order of importance and that the *Pradesikas*, therefore, occupied a higher rank than the *Rajukas*. May we not take them as governors of provinces who did not belong to the royal blood ? (Hult. CII, I, 5 ; Woolner, A. T. G., II, III ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 58-59 ; *Pol. Hist.*, 263-4.).

(*v*) The *Rujukas* were placed, as P. E. IV explains, "over many hundred thousands of souls". They had "sole control" in awarding rewards and punishments, were to secure the "welfare and happiness of the people of the *Janapada*" (province or country) just as a nurse keeps a child well, were to maintain "impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishments", and were also in charge of works of public utility. The *Rajukas* were thus very high officials no doubt ; but Prof. Mookerji's view that they were Provincial Governors proper (*Asoka*, 53 & 56) is untenable. From the variety and importance of the functions with which they were charged they appear to have been, as suggested by Dr. Ray Chaudhury, the officers whom the Greek writer Strabo has called the *Agronomoi*. (*Pol. Hist.*, 263). A *Rajuka* thus appears to have been an officer like the Magistrate and Collector of a modern Indian district. (Hult,, CII, xli ; Woolner, A. T. G., II, 127 ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 59-60).

(*vi*) The term *Yukta* or *Yuta* was at first taken as an adjective by Buhler and was interpreted to mean "faithful". Senart rightly took it as a substantive and Thomas held that it meant a "subordinate official." The last section of R. E. III shows that the *Yuktas* were to register rules when ordered to do so by the Council of *Mahamatras*. They were, therefore, "secre-

taries employed for codifying royal orders in the office of the Mahamatras". (Hult. CII, I, xli). Bhandarkar's view that they were officers in charge of the revenue of the King does not appear to be supported by any of Asoka's inscriptions. (*Asoka* 57-58).

(*vii*) *Pulishas* or *Purushas* were the next class of officers. According to P. E. I these officers, were divided into three grades—high, middle and low ; and, according to P. E. VII they "were placed in charge of many people" and were expected to "preach and disseminate" Dharma like all the other officers of Asoka. They were, therefore, a large class of officers entrusted with executive functions. Whether they were superior or inferior to the *Rajukas* depends upon the interpretation of sections 6 and 7 of Pillar Edict IV. (Ref. *poste* Ch. XIII). (Hult. CII, I, xii ; Bhandarkar, *Asoka* 64 & 341).

(*viii*) The *Pativedakas* were reporters or spies who were, according to R. E. VI., posted everywhere and had ready access to the King at all places and hours. Asoka depended on them for the supply of correct information quickly.

(*ix*) The *Vachavumikas* or *Vrajabhumikas*, mentioned in R. E. XII, were 'inspectors of cowpens'. (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 62). The edicts do not describe their functions beyond stating that they too were employed to preach Dharma.

(*x*) The *Lipikaras*, mentioned in R. E. XIV, were royal scribes whose function was to write out the inscriptions. Asoka was quite conscious that his scribes were capable of committing mistakes of omission and commission. There must have been a large number of these officers, only one of whom had the temerity to add his own name to the words of Asoka. That scribe was named Chapada and the Minor Rock Edict at Brahmagiri commemorates him.

(*xi*) *Dutas* mentioned in R. E. XIII, were certainly envoys. The designation was also applied to "conveyers of royal writs". (*Pol. Hist.*, 265).

(*xii & xii*) The *Ayuktas* and *Karanakas* were petty officers.

All the officers named above appear to have functioned in the provinces, away from the capital. How the capital city was administered or how exactly the imperial government was carried on, we are not told in the inscriptions. The King was evidently his own master and could act very much as he liked. The *Parishad* or Council is just mentioned and that only in two edicts *viz.* R. E. III and VI ; and it is impossible to infer much from these two meagre references. Of course no king, much less the ruler of a vast empire like that of Asoka, can do without ministers, and Asoka must have had quite a number of them. But his inscriptions contain nothing to show that the Council of Ministers of Asoka had the rights and status of a modern Cabinet of Ministers. His ministers were secretaries who carried out the policy which it was the right of Asoka alone to frame and for which he has answerable only to his conscience.

2. (a) Dr. Basak in his *Asokan Inscriptions* (p. 12) translates this passage differently and thus :—"The assembly (of followers of religious instructions inculcated by touring officers) will direct the *Yukta* officers in the matter of calculation (of all expenses of the touring officials) according to the spirit and text (of the royal rules or decrees)." This translation not only assumes much that is not to be found in the original text but also yields no sense. What can a congregation have to do with the travelling expenses of state officials on tours ! Secondly, the word *parisha*=*parishad,* which Dr. Basak translates here as an "assembly of followers", occurs once again only in Rock Edict VI where Dr. Basak has taken it to mean the "Council". (*Ibid,* p. 35 and 37). It then follows that according to Dr. Basak, Asoka used in his inscriptions the same word '*parisha*', unlike any other single word, in *two* different senses !

(b) The most interesting word in this passage is *Parisha* which has been interpreted as Council. This word occurs only

once again in Asokan edicts, and that in R. E. VI (vide *poste,* App. A) where it is stated that should there be any opposition or argumentation in the Council regarding any oral order of the king or any emergent work imposed on the *Mahamatras,* it shall at once be communciated to the king by the *Pativedakas.* On these two meagre references efforts have been made to build a theory that Asoka had an Executive Council. (Bhand. *Asoka,* 67). But the passage really shows how very small was the power enjoyed by the Council. The king's was always the deciding voice.

IX

ROCK EDICT V

ASOKA APPOINTS DHARMA-MAHAMATRAS—THIRTEENTH YEAR.

In the thirteenth year after his coronation Asoka appointed a new class of officers called *Dharma-mahamatras* or Superintendents of Dharma. This fact and the functions of these officers are set forth in Rock Edict V. This document is also important because it contains a reference to the brothers and sisters of Asoka.

The Kalsi version of Rock Edict V reads as follows :

1. King Devanampriya Pyriyadarshin speaks (thus).

2. It is difficult to perform virtuous deeds.

3. He who starts performing virtuous deeds accomplishes something difficult.

4. Now, by me many virtuous deeds have been performed.

5. Therefore (among) my sons and grand-sons, and (among) my descendants (who shall come) after them until the æon (of the destruction of the world), those who will conform to this (duty) will perform good deeds.

6. But he who will neglect even a portion of this (duty) will perform evil deeds.

7. For sin indeed steps fast[1].

8. Now, in times past (officers) called *Dharma-mahamatras* did not exist before.

9. *Dharma-mahamatras* were appointed by me (when I had been) anointed thirteen years[2].

10. These are occupied with all sects in establishing Dharma, in promoting Dharma, and for the welfare and happiness of those who are devoted to Dharma (even) among the Yonas, Kambojas and Gandhalas[3] and whatever other western borderers (of mine there are).

11. They are occupied with servants and masters, with Brahmanas and Ibhyas[4], with the destitute, (and) with the aged, for the welfare and happiness of those who are devoted to Dharma, (and) in releasing (them) from fetters (of worldly life).

12. They are occupied in supporting prisoners (with money), in causing (their) fetters to be taken off, and in setting (them) free, if one has children or is bewitched[5], aged, respectively.

13. They are occupied everywhere, here[6], and in all the outlying towns, in the harems of our brothers, of our sisters, and (of) whatever other relatives (of ours there are).

14. These *Dharma-mahamatras* are occupied everywhere in my dominions[7] with those who are devoted to Dharma, (in order to ascertain) whether one is eager for Dharma or properly devoted to charity.

15. For the following purpose has this rescript on Dharma been caused to be written, (*viz.* that) it

may be of long duration, and (that) my descendants may conform to it.

NOTES

1. The Shahbazgarhi version has, "Sin is easily committed".

2. Asoka says that officers called *Mahamatras* had existed in the past, but a new class of officers called *Dharma-mahamatras* were first created by Asoka in the thirteenth year after his coronation. Hultzsch translates Dharma-mahamatra as *Mahamatra* of morality: Buhler translated it as "overseer of the Sacred Law", and Smith as "Censor of the Law of Piety." As it is a proper name so it is better left untranslated.

Dharma-mahamatras are referred to, in addition to this edict, in R. E. XII and P. E. VII. A study of these three insciptions shows that the functions of these officers were as follow :—

(*i*) to establish and promote Dharma, *i. e.*, Buddhism ;

(*ii*) to secure the welfare and happiness of all Buddhistic subjects of Asoka including frontier peoples like the Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandharas ;

(*iii*) to look after the old and the destitute not only among the Buddhists but also amongst the Brahmanas and the Ibhyas (ref. below, *note*, 4.) who had been reduced to servitude ;

(*iv*) to help with money those prisoners who had children as well as to secure the release of those who were old ;

(*v*) to test and encourage the religious eagerness and the charitable inclination of the Buddhists

class of officers by any modern government is sure to be resented by all classes of citizens.

3. The Girnar, Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra versions add Rathikas (or Rastikas) and Petenikas to the Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandharas of the Kalsi version as the western borderers of Asoka's dominions. (For the identification of these peoples, refer *ante*, Ch. I. n 14).

4. Ibhyas, according to Hultzsch, mean Vaisyas. (CII, I, 33). Dr. Bhandarkar would equate them with Grihapatis who formed an "aristocratic class always ranking after the Kshatriyas and Brahmanas." (*Asoka, 190-'1* ; Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India,* 269-70). In section 25 of P. E. VII, Asoka says that the *Dharma-mahamatras* were occupied with the affairs which were beneficial to "ascetics and householders." In this passage of R. E. V we are told that the said officers were to secure the welfare and happiness of "the Brahmanas and Ibhyas." Equating the Brahmanas with the ascetics of P. E. VII may we not hold that the Ibhyas stood for householders, Brahmanical as well as non-Brahmanical ? In this connection it has to be observed that the Brahmanas, Sramanas, Ajivikas, Jains, Ibhyas, Dassa (slaves) and Bhritakas (paid servants) are the only social groups mentioned in the edicts which nowhere refer directly to the Kshatriyas and the Sudras. (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 191).

5. Bhandarkar's rendering is "subjected to oppression." (*Ibid, 309*).

6. The Shahbazgarhi version has "in Pataliputra" in place of the mere 'here' of the other versions. (Hultzsch. CII, I, 192).

7. This reference to his 'brothers" has been cited by Smith to disprove the tale of the Ceylonese chronicles that Asoka waded to the throne through the blood of his brothers all of whom were killed except one named Tishya. (EHI, 155). The reading and the translation of the passage as adopted by Hultzsch refer only to the 'harems' of Asoka's brothers and hardly justifies the inference of Smith that Asoka

had brothers alive when R. E. V was issued, that is to say, some time after the thirteenth year of Asoka's coronation. (Ref. *ante*, pp. 36-37, *note* 1.). Dr. Bhandarkar, however, translates the passage differently as follows : —"They are everywhere employed in (my) closed female apartments, or among my brothers, sisters, and other relatives." He, therefore, holds that "inscriptions speak, not of one brother, but of several, living and staying not only in Pataliputra, his capital, but also in various towns of his empire." (*Asoka, 9, 309, 315*). It is, however, too bold a statement to make on the strength of the edicts. First, Rock Edict V is the only Asokan inscription that refers to his brothers. Secondly, a synoptical reading of the different versions of the text of R. E. V shows that Dr. Bhandarkar's reading of the passage is based on the Dhauli version of the edict in which alone the pronominal adjective "my" is made to qualify the substantive *olodhanesu* (in the harems), and that all the other versions of the edict support the reading adopted by Hultzsch. Thirdly, Dr. Bhandarkar's objection to Hultzsch's reading on the ground that it makes Asoka's sisters also to have had 'harems". which is really absurd, disappears if the original word *olodhana* is translated not as harem, as Hultzsch does, but as "family establishments", as suggested by Dr. Ray Chaudhury, or simply as a 'palace' which according to Monier Williams, is also one of the meanings in which the word has been used in Sanskrit literature. Rock Edict V, therefore, proves, as Dr. Ray Chaudhury observes, "nothing regarding the authenticity or untrustworthiness of the Ceylonese tradition". (*pol. Hist.*, 240). (Ref. also *poste*, P. E. VII, *note* 16.)

8. Here also the Dhauli version differs from the other versions of the text. In place of 'my dominions' of the other versions, the Dhauli version reads 'on the whole earth'. Evidently the writer at Dhauli was too imaginative.

X

THE NIGLIVA PILLAR INSCRIPTION

ENLARGEMENT OF THE STUPA OF KONAKAMANA—FOURTEENTH YEAR.

In the fourteenth year after his coronation Asoka enlarged the stupa of the Buddha Konakamana near the village of Nigliva in the Basti district, U. P. This incident is referred to in the Nigliva Pillar Inscription. The pillar bearing the inscription has been found on the bank of a tank called the Nigali Sagar, near the village of Nigliva, which is only thirteen miles away from Rummindei where there is another Asokan pillar. The Nigliva pillar is called by Hultzsch the Nigali Sagar pillar after the name of the tank on the bank of which it stands.

The Nigliva Pillar inscription states :

1. When King Devanampriya Priyadarshin had been anointed fourteen years, he enlarged the stupa of the Buddha Konakamana[1] to the double (of its original size).

2. When he had been anointed (twenty)[2] years he came himself and worshipped (this spot) (and) caused (a stone pillar to be set up).

NOTES

1. Konakamana is the name of one of the six Buddhas who are supposed to have preceded Gautama Buddha. The fact that Asoka visited and enlarged the stupa of this mythical Buddha shows that the cult of worshipping the previous Buddhas was developed in Asoka's time.

2. The words within brackets were restored by Buhler on the strength of similar statements in the Rummindei Pillar inscription. (*vide poste*, Ch. XII). As Nigliva is only thirteen miles away from Rummindei it is reasonable to infer that the King visited the two places in the course of one and the same tour which he undertook in the twentieth year after his consecration.

XI

BARABAR CAVE INSCRIPTION III

GIFT OF A CAVE—NINETEENTH YEAR.

The next recorded incident in the life of Asoka is the gift of a cave in the nineteenth year after his coronation. This is referred to in Barabar Cave Inscription III which states :

"When King Priyadarshin had been anointed nineteen years, this cave in the very pleasant Kha-(latika mountain)[1] was given by me[2] for (shelter during) the rainy season[3].

NOTES

1. In the original only the first letter *Kha* is legible. The full name has been restored by Hultzsch in accordance with the Second Barabar Cave Inscription. (*vide ante*. Ch. VIII).

2. 'Me' may refer to Asoka or to an un-named donor.

3. It is to be noted that, like the name of the donor, that of the donee also is not mentioned. Presumably the donor was Asoka and the beneficiaries were the Ajivika brotherhood on whom Asoka had bestowed two other caves in the same locality in the twelfth year after his consecration.

XII

THE RUMMINDEI PILLAR EDICT

ASOKA'S VISIT TO LUMMINI—TWENTIETH YEAR.

In the twentieth year after his coronation Asoka went on pilgrimage and visited the Lumbini Park where the Buddha had been born. Asoka speaks of this visit in the Rummindei Pillar Inscription. It runs as follows[1] :

1. When King Devanampriya Priyadarshin had been anointed twenty years he came himself and worshipped (this spot) because the Buddha Sakyamuni was born here[2].

2. (He) both caused to be made a stone bearing a horse (?)[3] and caused a stone pillar[4] to be set up, (in order to show) that the Blessed One[5] was born here.

3. (He) made the village of Lummini free of taxes,[6] and paying (only) one-eighth share (of the produce)[7].

NOTES

1. Rummindei is a village in the Nepalese Terai. It is in the Bithri district of Nepal and is not very far from the Basti district in U. P. The Asoka pillar that bears the above inscription still stands in the village which in Asoka's time was called, as is shown by the concluding section of the edict, by the name of Lummini. The contents of the edict show that the pillar was erected on the spot by Asoka in order to mark the birth-place of the Buddha. So Lummini, or the modern

Rummindei, must be identical with Lumbini, where, according to tradition, the Buddha was born. Prof. Mookerji, who visited the site personally, says that the temple at Rummindei contains "a sculpture representing the nativity of the Buddha, the figure of his mother, Mahamaya, standing under the *sal* tree after her delivery, with three attendants." (*Asoka*, 202, *note* 1).

2. According to the Buddhist tradition, as preserved in the *Divyavadana*, Asoka started on a pilgrimage in the company of his preceptor, Upagupta ; and, the first place visited by the royal pilgrim was Lumbini Garden. On his arrival there Upagupta pointed to the particular tree under which the mother of the Buddha stood after she had delivered herself of the child and said, 'Oh Maharaj, here the Blessed One was born'. Then the king set up a shrine there, made a large donation of gold and then departed. The legends, however, do not mention any pillar that was set up on the spot by Asoka. But the similarity of the language of the *Divyavadana* and that of the inscription leaves no doubt as to the identity of the site of the pillar with Lumbini, the birth-place of the Buddha. (*Divyavadana*. p. 389).

3. There is a great deal of difference of opinion on the meaning of the passage. Hultzsch follows Charpentier. (CII. I. 164). Dr. Bhandarkar, following Sir Ramkrishna and Fleet, renders the passage as follows :—"he caused a huge stone wall to be made". (*Asoka*, 375). Prof. Mookerji adopts a suggestion of Dr. Barua and renders the passage thus :— "A stone bearing a figure was caused to be constructed." (*Asoka*, 201-'2).

4. The pillar stands to this day and bears the inscription which is very well preserved.

5. The original word is *Bhagaban*. (Hult. CII. I. 164).

6. The original word used is *bali* which, Dr. Bhandarkar, following Thomas, held, meant religious cesses and not simply taxes, as in the text above. The passage would then mean that Asoka exempted the Buddhist pilgrims who visited the

birth-place of the Buddha from the cesses *i.e.*, pilgrim's tax which they were presumably required to pay. (Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, 86). Hultzsch's interpretation as given in the text above undoubtedly leads to a contradiction in terms, for the village of Lumbini could not have been freed from taxes and required at the same time to pay one-eighth share of the produce. Hultzsch's explanatory note that "In the case of the village of Lumbini, bureaucracy prevailed against charity" reflects no credit on the personality of the King. Dr. Bhandarkar's interpretation, therefore, holds the field.

7. The village must have been paying the royal treasury a share of its produce as rent. What exactly this portion was is not known. It was probably between one-fourth and one-sixth of the gross produce. Asoka reduced it to one-eighth in honour of the circumstance that the village was the birth-place of the Buddha. It would have been very helpful if Asoka had added the rate that was in force before this reduction.

The Rummindei Pillar Edict thus tells us that Asoka showed his respect for the Buddha by

(*i*) personally visiting the place and worshipping it ;

(*ii*) constructing a stone wall surrounding the exact site of the Nativity ;

(*iii*) erecting a stone-pillar with a suitable inscription to mark the place and to commemorate the fact ;

(*iv*) exempting the pilgrims visiting the place from all religious cesses ; and

lastly, by reducing the royal share of the produce of the village of Lumbini to one-eighth only.

XIII

PILLAR EDICT IV

ASOKA ISSUES THE FIRST SIX PILLAR EDICTS AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RAJUKAS—TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR.

In the twenty-sixth year after his coronation Asoka issued the Six Pillar Edicts. Of these Six Pillar Edicts. two *viz.* the second and the third, bear no date, but the other four are all dated the twenty-sixth year after Asoka's coronation. As all the Six Pillar Edicts form one *ensemble* so they must have been issued at the same time *viz.* in the twenty-sixth year after Asoka's coronation. Pillar Edict IV sets forth the instructions that Asoka issued to the Rajukas who, as we have seen, were very high officials of Asoka.

Pillar Edict IV runs as follows :

1. King Devanampriya speaks thus.

2. This rescript on Dharma was caused to be written by me (when I had been) anointed twenty-six years.

3. My *Lajukas*[1] are occupied with the people, with many hundred thousands of men.

4. I have ordered that either rewards or punishments are left to their discretion, in order that the *Lajukas* should perform their duties confidently (and) fearlessly, that they should bestow welfare and hapiness on the people of the country, and that they should confer benefits (on them).

5. They will know how to cause pleasure and to cause pain (to them), and will exhort the people of

the country through those who are devoted to Dharma, in order that they may attain (happiness) both in this (world) and in the other (world).

6. The *Lajukas* must also obey me.

7. They will also obey the agents[2] who know my wishes.

8. And these (agents) will also exhort those people in order that the Lajukas may be able to please me.

9. For, as one feels confident after having entrusted (his) child to an intelligent nurse, (thinking) : "The intelligent nurse will be able to keep my child well", so the *Lajukas* were appointed by me for the welfare and happiness of the country people.

10. In order that they should perform their duties, being fearless, confident, and unperturbed, for this purpose I have ordered that either rewards or punishments are left to the discretion of the *Lajukas*.

11. For the following is to be desired, (*viz.*), that there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishments[3].

12. And my order (reaches) even so for (that) a respite of three days is granted by me to persons lying in prison on whom punishment has been passed, (and) who have been condemned to death[4].

13. (In this way) either (their) relatives will persuade those (*Lajukas*) to (grant) their life, or, if

there is none who persuades (them), they will bestow gifts or will undergo fasts in order to (attain happiness) in the other (world).

14. For my desire is this, that, even when the time (of respite[5]) has expired, they should attain happiness in the other (world)[6].

15. And various moral practices, self-control, (and) the distribution of gifts are (thus) promoted among the people.

NOTES

1. The functions of the *Lajukas* or *Rajukas* have already been discussed. (*ante*, p. 47).

2. The original term used is *Purusha*, a class of officers whose functions and gradation have already been discussed. (*ante*, p. 48). Dr. Bhandarkar translates this and the immediately preceding passages differently thus :—"*Rajukas* are eager to obey me. And just because the *Rajukas* desire to obey me *Purushas* also will obey my wishes and orders". Hultzsch takes *Purushas* for agents or highly placed Intelligence Branch officers who were stationed all over the empire for supplying the King with secret information and for conveying to the local officers the confidential instructions of the King. In P. E. VII (*poste*, Ch. XIV) where the *Purushas* and *Rajukas* are both mentioned, the *Purushas* are said to have had charge of "many people", while the *Rajukas* are declared to have been placed over "many hundred thousands of lives". The *Rajukas*, therefore, appear to have been higher officers than the *Purushas*. Dr. Bhandarkar equates the *Rajukas* with the modern District Officers and the *Purushas* with the Sub-Divisional Officers. (*Asoka*, 64-65).

3. The original expressions are *viyohala-samata* (*i.e.*, *vyavahara-samata*) and *damda-samata*. The interpretation of

these two terms has been an object of much dispute. MM. H. P. Shastri held that the expressions meant "equality in law-suits" and "equality in punishment" irrespective of caste, colour and creed and that consequently this order was most offensive to Brahmanas who claimed many privileges including immunity from capital punishment. (Shastri, JASB, 1910, p, 260). Other scholars have, however, interpreted the two terms as meaning uniformity of procedure and uniformity of punishment. Dr. Ray Choudhury thinks that this uniformity of procedure and uniformity of punishment were introduced by Asoka in order to curtail the discretionary powers of the *Rajukas* in awarding reward and punishment, and that it did not infringe any of the rights of the Brahmanas who, moreover, were not exempt from the capital punishment in ancient India. (*Pol. Hist.*, 298-99). Dr. Bhandarkar thinks that uniformity was secured by relieving of their judicial functions the *Nagara-vyavaharika* (City Magistrates) and the *Pradeshikas* who along with the *Rajukas* had performed the functions of judges, and by handing over to the *Rajukas* the sole charge of the judicial department. (*Asoka*, *75-76*). This seems rather far-fetched. Hultzsch's rendering of the terms, as in the text, appears to be the most reasonable as it implies that Asoka who had armed the *Rajukas* with supreme judicial power rightly insisted on their being impartial in the dispensation of justice. And impartiality of the judges need not have offended the Brahmanas. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that under the early Maurya Emperors the Brahmanas occupied a privileged position. "It was customary," as Dr. Thomas observes, "to consult the forest-dwelling Brahmanas upon high political matters, and in the law-courts the sacred law was stated by Brahmana assessors. The Brahmana was a person who was sacred. He was exempt from taxation and confiscation". (CHI, i. 484). Further, according to Gautama Dharma Shastra, a good Brahmana must not be subjected to corporal punishment, he must not be imprisoned, he must not be fined, he must not be exiled, he must not be reviled nor be excluded. (VIII, 12-13). One may rightly wonder if a Buddhist king like Asoka could have allowed the

Brahmanas to continue to possess all these extraordinary rights from which members of his own religious community were excluded. To hold that the munificent royal patronage of Buddhism by Asoka did not displease his Brahmanical subjects is to hold that they were either less than human beings or they were all supermen who did not care whether they continued to possess the rights and privileges which had so long been theirs.

4. The capital punishment was thus not unknown or abolished in the time of Asoka. The only restriction that he imposed was that a man on whom the death sentence has been pronounced should be allowed three days' respite during which he might either secure his release by moving the higher officers or, failing that, prepare himself by prayer and fasting and by making gifts for a better life in the next world.

5. The words within brackets are not to be found in the edict. These have been supplied by Hultzsch. Dr. Bhandarkar suggests "of their living" in place of "of respite" in the text above. He thinks that Asoka means that during the three days of respite the condemned men should so engage themselves in bestowing gifts or in undergoing fasts that after the time of their living has expired, that is to say, after they have been executed they should be happy in the next world. (*Asoka*, 346).

6. Asoka's belief in the other world is expressed here. It also finds expression in many other edicts *e.g.* R.E.XIII. (*vide ante*. Ch, II, n 1)

XIV

PILLAR EDICT VII

ASOKA SUMMARISES HIS WORK—TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR.

When Asoka had been consecrated twenty-seven years he issued Pillar Edict VII. This edict is, as Hultzsch says, unique. Unlike the first six pillar edicts which have been found on as many as six pillars situated in different places, Pillar Edict VII has been found, along with the first six pillar edicts, on only what is known as the Delhi-Topra Pillar. The Pillar is so called because it was removed by the orders of Sultan Firoz Shah Toghlak from its original site in the village of Tobra or Topra to its present position in Delhi. (Elliott, *History of India*, iii, 350-352). P. E. VII is the longest of the pillar edicts, and happened to be the first inscription of Asoka that was read by Prinsep as far back as 1837. Lastly, it gives a sort of a summary of what Asoka did for "the progress of men by an adequate promotion of Dharma", and has consequently been called by Thomas the "testament of Asoka". (CHI, i, 509).

The text of Pillar Edict VII is as follows :

1. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

2. The kings who were in times past, had this desire that men might (be made to) progress by the promotion of Dharma, but men were not made to progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma.

3. Concerning this king Devanampriya speaks thus.

4. On the one hand, in times past, kings had this desire, that men might (be made to) progress

by an adequate promotion of Dharma ; (but) on the other hand, men were not made to progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma.

5. How then might men (be made to) conform to Dharma.

6. How might men (be made to) progress by an adequate promotion of Dharma.

7. How could I elevate them by the promotion of Dharma.

8. Concerning this, King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

9. The following occurred to me.

10. I shall issue proclamations on Dharma, (and) shall order instruction in Dharma (to be given).

11. Hearing this, men will conform to (it), will be elevated and will be made to progress considerably by the promotion of Dharma.

12. For this purpose proclamations on Dharma[1] were issued by me, (and) manifold instruction in Dharma was ordered (to be given), in order that those agents[2] of mine too, who are occupied with many people, will exhort (them) and will explain Dharma (to them) in detail.

13. The *Lajukas*[3] also, who are occupied with many hundred thousands of men,—these too were ordered by me : 'In such and such a manner exhort ye the people who are devoted to Dharma'.

14. Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

15. Having in view this very (matter), I have set up pillars of Dharma[4], appointed *Dharma-mahamatras*[5], (and) issued (proclamations) on Dharma[6].

16. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

17. On the roads banyan-trees were caused to be planted by me (in order that) they might afford shade to cattle and men, (and) mango-groves were caused to be planted.

18. And (at intervals) of eight *kos*[7] wells were caused to be dug by me, and flights of steps[8] (for descending into the water) were caused to be built.

19. Numerous drinking places were caused to be established by me, here and there, for the enjoyment of cattle and men[9].

20. (But) this so called enjoyment (is of little consequence).

21. For with various comforts have the people been blessed both by former kings and by myself.

22. But by me this has been done for the following purpose: that they might conform to that practice of Dharma[10].

23. Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

24. Those my *Dharma-mahamatras* too are occupied with affairs of many kinds which are beneficial to ascetics as well as to householders[11], and they are occupied also with all sects.

25. Some (*Mahamatras*) were ordered by me to busy themselves with the affairs of the *Samgha*[12]; likewise others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the Brahmanas (and) Ajivikas[13], others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the Nirgranthas[14]. Others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with various (other) sects; (thus) different *Mahamatras*[15] (are busying themselves) specially with different (congregations).

26. But my *Dharma-mahamatras* are occupied with these congregations as well as with other sects.

27. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

28. Both these and many other chief (officers) are occupied with the delivery of the gifts of myself as well of the queens, and among my whole harem (they are reporting) in divers ways different worthy recipients of charity both here[16] and in the provinces.

29. And others were ordered by me to busy themselves also with the delivery of the gifts of (my) sons and of other queens' sons,[17] in order (to promote) noble deeds of Dharma and the practice of Dharma.

30. For noble deeds of Dharma and the practice of Dharma (consist in) this, that (Dharma) *viz.*, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness, will thus be promoted among men.[18]

31. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

32. Whatsoever good deeds have been performed by me, those the people have imitated, and to those they are conforming.

33. Thereby they have been made to progress and will (be made to) progress in obedience to mother and father, in obedience to elders, in courtesy to the aged, in courtesy to the Brahmanas and Sramanas, to the poor and distressed, (and) even to slaves and servants.

34. King Devanampriya Priyadarshin speaks thus.

35. Now this progress of Dharma among men has been promoted (by me) only in two ways (*viz.*), by restrictions of Dharma and by conversion. [19]

36. But among these (two), those restrictions of Dharma are of little consequence ; by conversion, however, (Dharma is promoted) more considerably.

37. Now restrictions of Dharma indeed are these, that I have ordered this, (that) certain animals are inviolable.

38. But there are also many other restrictions of Dharma which have been imposed by me.

39. By conversion, however, the progress of Dharma among men has been promoted more considerably, (because it leads) to abstention from hurting living beings (and) abstention from killing animals.

40. Now for the following purpose has this been ordered, that it may last as long as (my) sons

and great-grandsons (shall reign) and in order that (men) may conform to it.

41. For if one conforms to this, (happiness) in this (world) and in the other (world) will be attained.

42. This rescript on Dharma was caused to be written by me (when I had been) anointed twenty-seven years.

43. Concerning this Devanampriya says.

44. This rescript on Dharma must be engraved there, where either stone pillars or stone slabs are (available), in order that this may be of long duration.

NOTES

1. The Minor Rock Edicts are referred to. (CII. I. 134. 4).

2. "Agents" is Hultzsch's translation of *Purushas*, whose status and functions have already been discussed. (*ante*, Ch. VIII).

3. Lajuka is only a variant of Rajuka whose status etc. have also been already discussed. (*ante*, Ch. VIII).

4. The original used is *dhammastamva*, which literally means "pillars of Dharma", Hultzsch follows Buhler and holds that the term alludes to the Six Pillar Edicts which Asoka issued a year before Pillar Edict VII. (CII. I. 134, *note* 11). Dr. Barua thinks that the term means "monuments of Dharma" and refers to the Asokan topes. (*Asoka Edicts in New Light*, 54). Dr. Bhandarkar holds that the term does not denote any material pillars, but it really refers to "Asoka's works of charity" which are set forth in section 17 of this edict. (*Asoka*, 148). The passage ends with a reference to the "proclamations

on Dharma", which, as stated above in *note* 1, allude to the Minor Rock Edicts. It, therefore, appears that Asoka is here referring to the two classes of edicts that he issued *viz.*, Pillar Edicts and Minor Rock Edicts.

5. The posts of *Dharma-mahamatras* were first created, as stated in R. E. V, in the thirteenth year after Asoka's coronation. Their functions have already been discussed. (Ref. *ante*, pp. 53-54).

6. In sections 12-15 Asoka says that for the promotion of Dharma he adopted four measures *viz.*, (*i*) imperial officers, especially the *Purushas* and the *Rajukas*, were ordered to preach the Dharma ; (*ii*) Pillar Edicts were set up ; (*iii*) a special class of officers, called the *Dharma-mahamatras*, was appointed ; and (*iv*) the Minor Rock Edicts were issued. It is to be noted that the Fourteen Rock Edicts are not mentioned.

7. The original used is *adha kosa*. In R. E. XIII as well as in the Rummindei Pillar Edict *atha* is used to denote eight. So *adha* has been taken by some scholars to mean 'a half'. (Thomas, CHI, I. 510 ; Mookerji. *Asoka*, 188, *n*. 4). Wells were, in their view, dug at intervals of half a *kos* or *krosa*. A *krosa* was equal to 4000 yards, and a half of it to a mile and 240 yards. Hultzsch objects to the adoption of this interpretation on the ground that "it would have been unneeessarily lavish and unpractical to sink wells" at such short distances. (CII, I, 135, *n*. 1). But would not the sinking of wells at a distance of eight *kos* which represented a day's march, be too miserly to be of much benefit to the travelling public in a hot country like India ?

8. The original used is *nimsidhiya* which meant, according to Buhler, Fleet and Thomas, rest-houses. Hutlzsch's rendering, as in the text above, does not seem to be very happy. "Flights of steps" leading presumably to the waters of the wells sunk by Asoka would have been rather useless luxuries, and such steps are also not much known in India. But rest-houses which afford protection from the elements are very welcome

illustrations of public benevolence in India. Dr. Bhandarkar and Prof. Mookerji both follow Buhler. (*Asoka*, 353 ; *Asoka*, 188-'89)

9. In sections 17-19 Asoka tells us that for the benefit of men and beasts he performed the following charitable acts :—

(*i*) he planted banyan-trees on the roads ;

(*ii*) he planted mango-groves ;

(*iii*) he sunk wells at regular intervals ;

(*iv*) he constructed rest-houses ; and

(*v*) he established many drinking.places.

10. In sections 21 and 22 Asoka says that benevolent works of public utility, as have been described above, were also undertaken by previous kings, but he constructed such works for the special purpose of encouraging Dharma amongst the people.

11. Ascetics and householders, as mentioned here, may well be compared with the Brahmanas and Ibhyas of R. E. V. The similarity between the two expressions suggests the inference that Ibhyas in R. E. V denoted the same class of people as are referred to here as householders. (ref. *ante*, Ch. VIII).

12. *Samgha* meant the Buddhist clergy. (ref. *ante*, Ch. III).

13. Dr. Bhandarkar has Brahmanical Ajivikas. (ref. *ante*, Ch. VII).

14. *Nirgranthas* were Jaina monks. (Hult. CII, I, 136, *n*. 4).

15. The *Mahamatras* mentioned in section 25 are to be differentiated from the *Dharma-mahamatras* mentioned in sections 24 and 26. What Asoka says is this :—There were *Mahamatras* to look after the Buddhist clergy, the Brahmanical ascetics, the Ajivikas, the Jaina monks and other sects. When the *Dharma-mahamatras* came to be created in the thirteenth year after Asoka's coronation, they were required to co-operate with the ordinary *Mahamatras* in supervising all those different

sects. Evidently Asoka saw to it that the spiritual lives of his subjects did not suffer from want of supervision by his officers. As stated in sections 28 and 29, the *Dharma-mahamatras* were to co-operate with other chief royal officers in distributing in the capital as well as in the provinces the gifts of the King and of the Queens, of their sons and of the other ladies in the royal household and also in recommending worthy recipients of royal charity. (Ref. *ante*, Ch. IX).

16. As in R. E. V, 'here' means "in Pataliputra."

17. A distinction is clearly made between Asoka's own sons and the sons of queens who were not Asoka's wives. Buhler suggested that the expression "other queens" referred to the queens of his father, and, their sons were, therefore, the step-brothers of Asoka. (*Ep. Ind.*, ii, 276). If this suggestion is accepted the passage would justify the inference that some of the step-brothers of Asoka were alive till the twenty-seventh year after Asoka's consecration. (ref. *ante*, pp. 55-56, *n.* 7). The reference to his "queens" in section 28 and to his "sons" in section 29 of this edict shows that Asoka had a number of queens who bore him more than one son. For further discus sion on the point reference may be made to Queen's Pillar Edict. (*poste*, Ch. XIV).

18. This section read with section 33 shows that Asoka's Dharma consisted in the practice of compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness, goodness, obedience to parents, and to preceptors, and courtesy to the aged, to Brahmanas and Sramanas, to the poor and the distressed as well as to slaves and servants. It also insisted on certain restrictions which are discussed below in *note* 21. Section 41 of this edict shows that the reward for practising all these virtues which constituted Dharma, was the attainment of happiness in this as well as in the other world. The Girnar version of R. E. IX (refer *poste* App. B) holds up the attainment of heaven (swarga) also as the reward for the practice of Dharma. So does R. E. VI (refer *poste*, App. A)

19. Dr. Bhandarkar has "exhortation" in place of "conversion" and that certainly yields a better meaning.

20. P. E. V names the birds and beasts that Asoka declared to be inviolable. The more well-known amongst these "prohibited" creatures were parrots, *mainas*, geese, bats, tortoises, porcupines, bulls set at liberty, rhinoceros, doves, all quadrupeds which are neither useful nor edible, she-goats, ewes and sows which are either with young or in milk, and fish which was forbidden on about one hundred days in the year.

21. The restrictions of Dharma (or *dharma-niyama*, as Asoka calls them), were both positive and negative. The positive virtues have been discussed above (*vide above note* 18.). The negative restrictions forbade the killing of animals, hurting of living beings, holding of objectionable festive meetings, observing of fruitless superstitious social ceremonies and praising one's own sect while condemning the sects of other people. (Mookerji, *Asoka*, 68-78).

22. Pillar Edict VII has been found on only one stone-pillar and Asoka's command here remained to that extent unexecuted ; but Asoka's hope that his instructions may be of long duration has been amply fulfilled. More than two thousand years have passed since the monarch engraved those words yet his lithic records are still preaching his doctrine of non-violence to a world based on organised violence.

XV

THE QUEEN'S PILLAR EDICT

ASOKA'S SECOND QUEEN AND HER SON.

Sections 28 and 29 of P. E. VII refer, as we have seen, to the queens and sons of Asoka. That edict, however, does not specify either the names or the numbers of the queens and their sons. According to Buddhist tradition Asoka had five queens, *viz.*, Asandhimitra, the chief queen, Karuvaki, Devi, Padmavati and Tishyarakshita, and four sons, *viz.*, Mahendra, Tivara, Dharmavivardhana or Kunala and Jalauka. Mahendra was born of Devi, Tivara of Karuvaki and Kunala of Padmavati (Mookerji, *Asoka*, 9). Though the sons of Asoka are mentioned in a number of his edicts, the Queen's Pillar Edict is the only inscription of Asoka that bears the names of a son and of a queen of Asoka. This inscription has been found on the Allahabad-Kosam pillar and is engraved just below the first Six Pillar Edicts. It is thus posterior to the Six Pillar Edicts and could not have been, therefore, issued earlier than the twenty-sixth year after Asoka's coronation.

The Queen's Pillar Edict runs thus :

1. At the word of Devanampriya, the ***Mahamatras*** everywhere have to be told this.

2. What gifts (have been made) here by the second queen, *viz.*, mango-groves or gardens, or alms-houses or whatever else, these (shall) be registered (in the name) of that queen.

3. This (is the request) of the second queen, the mother of Tivala, the Kaluvaki[1].

NOTES

1. Kaluvaki or Karuvaki is a family name and might have referred to a princess of the family of the Kurus. (Hult., CII, I, 159, *note* 9). Kaluvaki, the second queen of Asoka, bore him a son name *Tivara* or *Tivala*. Inscriptions of Asoka do not mention by name any other queen or any other son of Asoka. As Kaluvaki is called the second queen so Asoka must have had at least two wives.

XVI

SARNATH PILLAR EDICT

ASOKA AND THE BUDDHIST CHURCH COUNCIL.

Asoka has left us no dated or undated inscription which records any event that took place later than the twenty-seventh year after his consecration when P. E. VII was issued. According to Buddhist tradition, however, a meeting of the Buddhist Church Council was held at Pataliputra in the seventeenth year of Asoka's reign (Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, v, 280) : but no reference to such a Council has beed found in any of his main inscriptions. There is, however, the Sarnath Pillar Edict with its two variants found on Asoka Pillars at Sanchi and Kausambi. The Kausambi Pillar Edict is very brief and has also come down to us in a sadly mutilated form. It conveys the command of Asoka to the *Mahamatras* of Kausambi to remember that the Buddhist Church is united and that a monk or nun who shall break up the Church should be compelled to put on white robes and to live in "non-residence". In view of its contents the Kausambi Edict is believed to have been issued after Asoka had convened a meeting of the Buddhist Church Council. Further, the Kausambi Edict has been found inscribed below the first Six Pillar Edicts and the Queen's Edict on the Asokan Pillar that stands at present at Allahabad but which was originally erected at Kausambi from which place it is believed to have been removed to its present site. (Hult., CII, I, xx). From its position in the pillar it has been inferred that the Kausambi Edict was issued after the Six Pillar Edicts. Again, as P. E. VII, which is generally believed to contain a summary of measures taken up to that time by Asoka for the promotion and propagation of Buddhism, does not make any mention of the meeting of a Buddhist Church Council it has been held that the Council met after P. E. VII had been issued twenty-seven years after Asoka's

coronation. The Kausambi Edict was, therefore, posterior in date to P. E. VII. The Sarnath Pillar Edict of which the Kausambi Edict is, as has already been observed, only at variant, must also be similarly dated.

The Sarnath Pillar Edict reads as follows :

1. Devanampriya.........

2. ......Pata (liputra) [1].........

3. ......the *Samgha* cannot be divided by any one[2]

4. But indeed the monk or nun who shall break up the *Samgha*[3], should be caused to put on white robes and to reside in non-residence.[4]

5. Thus this edict must be submitted both to the *Samgha* of monks and to the *Samgha* of nuns.

6. Thus speaks Devanampriya.

7. Let one copy of this edict remain with you deposited in your office and deposit ye another copy of this very (edict) with the lay-worshippers.

8. These lay-worshippers may come on every fast-day[5] in order to be inspired with confidence in this very edict ; and invariably on every fast-day every *Mahamatra* (will) come to the fast-day (service) in order to be inspired with confidence in this very edict and to understand (it).

9. And as far as your district (extends) dispatch ye (an officer) everywhere according to the letter of this (edict)[6].

10. In the same way cause (your subordinates)

to dispatch (an officer) according to the letter of this (edict) in all the territories (surrounding) forts.

NOTES

1. The Kausambi Edict was addressed, as stated above, to the *Mahamatra* of Kausambi. The word 'Pataliputra' in section 2 of the Sarnath Edict suggests that it was originally perhaps addressed to the *Mahamatras* of Pataliputra.

2. Asoka thus forbids schisms. In the Sanchi version of the edict the following sentence intervenes between sections 3 and 4 :—"The *Samgha* both of monks and nuns is made united as long as (my) sons and great-grandsons (shall reign) and as long as the moon and the sun (shall shine)".

3. According to Buddhist tradition as preserved in the *Mahavamsa*, a *Dharmasamgiti* or an assembly of the Buddhist Church Council met, soon after the Buddha's demise, at Rajagriha under the chairmanship of *thera* Mahakashyapa in the reign of Ajatasatru. This Council collected the teachings of the Buddha and compiled the Sutta and the Vinaya Pitakas which along with the Abhidhamma Pitaka constitute the scriptures of Buddhism. After some time differences having arisen amongst the Buddhist monks on some questions of conduct and discipline the Buddhist Church Council met a second time a hundred years later at Vaisali under the guidance of monk Yasa in the reign of Kalasoka. The meeting of the second Buddhist Church Council was followed by the secession of ten thousand monks and the Buddhist Church had become divided into serveral sections before the Third Council was convened at Pataliputra in the seventeenth year of Asoka's reign with monk Tissa as the Chairman. (Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, pp. 15-50). This Council re-iterated the true doctrine, expelled sixty thousand monks, (*ibid*, p. 49) and decided to send missionaries to different foreign countries (*ibid*, p. 82). Geiger thinks that "a genuine historical reminiscence underlies the tradition", and

two Buddhist Church Councils had already met before Asoka convened the Third Council at Pataliputra. (*Ibid*, pp. lvii-lxiii). The Buddhist traditions are, however, so full of absurdities and inconsistencies that Kern thought that the Second Council at Vaisali took place, not a century after the death of the Buddha, but during the reign of Asoka, and that the Third Council at Pataliputra was not a general meeting of the Buddhist Church but a party meeting. (*Manual of Indian Buddhism*, 110-111). Dr. Bhandarkar, again, points out that if the schism in the Buddhist Church is held to have taken place before Asoka's time all references in the edicts to the *Samgha* would allude only to a section of the Buddhist clergy, and the King who was so solicitous for the welfare of even non-Buddhist sects like the Ajivikas and the Jainas will be appearing as anxious for the welfare of his own sect only amongst the Buddhists, which is absurd. He, therefore, thinks that "in Asoka's time the Buddhist Church was not divided, and, wherever Asoka uses the word *Samgha* he means the whole undivided Church." (*Asoka*, 98-99). It has, however, to be remembered that dissenters in all ages have incurred the greater displeasure of the orthodox section than members of other religious communities. A perusal of the Kausambi and Sarnath edicts, however, leaves no doubt that at the time when these edicts were issued the integrity of the Buddhist Church was felt to have been so seriously threatened that so mild a king as Asoka was driven to recommend severe punishments for the would-be schismatics. And who knows how many monks and nuns were expelled from the Church by over-zealous officers of the State to whom the duty of enforcing the edicts was entrusted by Asoka ?

4. A Buddhist monk as well as a Buddhist nun should generally wear yellow-coloured clothes and should live in a monastery. Asoka ordered that schismatic monks or nuns should not be allowed to wear yellow nor to reside in a monastery ; but they should be compelled to put on white dresses and should also be expelled from monasteries and thus compelled

to live in places which were not considered fit for the residence of monks and nuns. As stated above, the *Mahavamsa* records (Geiger, p. 49) that Asoka expelled from the *Samgha* sixty thousand heretical monks. In the *Samantapasadika* it is further recorded that Asoka expelled the heretical monks after giving them white robes. (Mookerji, *Asoka*, 198).

5. The *astami* (eighth day), the *chaturdasi* (fourteenth day), and the *purnima* (full-moon) or *amavasya* (new-moon) in each *paksha* (lunar fortnight) were the days of fast for the Buddhists. On these days religious discourses were held to which the laity were admitted except on the new or full-moon-days when the discourse was open to the monks only. (Mookerji, *Asoka*, 195, *note*). Asoka thus required his *Mahamatras* to attend religious discourses on the eighth and fourteenth days of each lunar fortnight in order to be reminded of their duties in connection with schismatic monks and nuns.

6. Dr. Bhandarkar renders this and the following passages thus :—"And as far as your jurisdiction goes, you must set out on tour with this specification (of order). So too in all fortified towns and (the) district sub-divisions, you must cause subordinates to go out on tours with this specification (of order)." (*Asoka*, 379).

Both the renderings, however, agree on the sense. The king was most anxious to give his order the widest circulation. He, therefore, commands that the edict should be communicated to

(*i*) all monks and nuns, (sec. 5),

(*ii*) the Mahamatras of Pataliputra who should keep a copy of the edict in their office, (sec. 7),

(*iii*) the laity at Pataliputra, (sec. 7),

(*iv*) all the subordinate officers of the *Mahamatras* of Pataliputra, (sec. 9), and

(*v*) the *Mahamatras* of important centres like Kausambi and Sanchi, as shown by the Kausambi and Sanchi edicts.

All these efforts were not in vain, for so long as Asoka lived the Buddhist Church remained intact, and under the untiring guardianship and munificent patronage of Asoka, Buddhism was transformed from the doctrine of a small Indian sect into one of the great religions ef the world.

APPENDIX A

TRANSLATIONS OF ASOKAN EPIGRAPHS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FIRST EDITION.

ROCK EDICTS

ROCK EDICT I

This edict on Dharma has been caused to be written by Devnampriya Priyadarsi. No animal whatsoever is to be killed here for sacrificial purposes. No convivial party[1] also is to be held here[2]. For Devanampriya Priyadarsi notices manifold evils in a convivial party. There is however in the opinion of Devanampriya Priyadarsi one kind of convivial party which is wholesome. In the past hundreds of thousands of living beings were daily slaughtered in[1] the royal kitchen for the purpose of making curries. But recently when this edict on Dharma was caused to be written only three living beings are slaughtered—two peacocks and one deer.

NOTES

1. The original word is *samaja* which, according to the Arthasastra of Kautilya, means a convivial meeting or social gathering where food and drinks are supplied. Asoka condemns such social gatherings, but recommends social gatherings where discussions on religions are held (vide R. E. XII, *poste* p. 96).

2. 'Here' may mean 'all over the empire'.

The deer also is not slaughtered regularly (every day). Even these three living beings will not be slaughtered (hereafter).[1]

NOTE

1. There is no epigraphic evidence to show that this was done, though it is most likely that Asoka was as good as his words and became later on a complete vegetarian.

ROCK EDICT II

All over the dominions of Devnampriya Priyadarsi and likewise in the territories of the frontier peoples[1], namely the Chodas, the Pandyas, the Satyaputras, the Keralaputras as far as Tamraparni and also in the territories of the Yona king named Antiyoka[2] as well as in the territories of all the other feudatories of this Antiyoka—everywhere king Devnampriya Priyadarsi has instituted two kinds of medical treatment—one for men and the other for animals. Medicinal herbs necessary for men and for beasts have been imported and planted wherever these are not available. Similarly roots and fruit-trees have been imported and planted wherever these are not available. On the roads trees have been planted and wells have been sunk for the enjoyment of beasts and men.

NOTES

1. Refer *ante* Ch. I *note* 10.
2. *Ibid*, pp. 10—11.

For Rock Edict III refer *ante* Ch. VIII.

For Rock Edict IV refer *ante* Ch. VI.

For Rock Edict V refer *ante* Ch. IX.

ROCK EDICT VI

King Devnampriya Priyadarsin said thus :

For a long time past there has been no transaction of business or receipt of reports at all hours. Consequently this has been arranged by me: reporters are to report to me peoples' business at all hours, even when I am eating, or in the harem, or in the stables (inspecting the horses), or on the horse-back, or in the garden. I shall attend to peoples' business wherever I may be. If there arises any controversy in the Council[1] regarding any of my verbal orders in regard to donations or proclamations or in connection with any urgent matter entrusted to the Mahamatras[2] it should be immediately reported to me in all places (*i. e.*, wherever I may be) and at all times. This has been ordered by me.

I have never felt satisfied with my exertion and speed in the dispatch of peoples' business. My duty is to secure the welfare of all persons. The secret of that lies in exertion and in dispatching business with promptness. Indeed there is no other work more important than the work for the welfare of the people. And the reason for the little (welfare)

NOTES

1. Refer *ante* R. E. III, Ch. VIII *note* 2.

2. *Ibid*, p. 44.

work that I try to do is that I wish to discharge the debt that I owe to all creatures, so that I may make some happy in this existence, or help them attain *svarga*[1] in the life hereafter.

So for this purpose this edict on Dharma has been written—that it may last for all times and my sons, grandsons and great-grandsons may also exert themselves for the welfare of all persons. But this is difficult to accomplish without great exertions.

NOTE

1. Note the reference to 'svarga' (heaven) and compare R. E. IX [*poste*, pp. 90—91 & M. R. E. I, p. 20].

ROCK EDICT VII

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi desires that all religious sects may dwell everywhere (in his dominions). All sects desire self-control and purity of thought. People, however, have different impulses and passions. They will perform either the whole or a part (of their religious duties). But a person whose charities are very large but who does not possess self-control, purity of thought, gratefulness and firm devotion, is assuredly base.

For Rock Edict VIII refer *ante* Ch. IV.

ROCK EDICT IX

King Devnampriya Priyadarsi said :

People perform various auspicious rites on the occasions of illness, marriages of sons and daughters, births of children and departure on journeys away from homes. On such occasions women particularly perform various rites which are really trivial and futile.

There are however rites which have to be performed. The rites (mentioned above) are of little benefit, but the performance of rites promoting Dharma is of great benefit. These latter are—proper treatment to slaves and servants, reverence to elders, restraint to living beings and gifts to Sramanas and Brahmanas. These and similar rites are called the rites of Dharma. This is to be spoken by the father, by the son, by the brother, by the husband (or master), by the friend and acquaintance and even by the neighbour—'this is excellent, this rite is to be performed until its object is attained'. How is it so ? The other rites are of dubious effect—one may or may not get any benefit by performing those rites, and if any benefit is derived, it pertains to this life only. But the benefit of performing rites of Dharma transcends time; even if its fruits are not received immediately, endless merit is produced by their performance. When it becomes fruitful (in this life) then both the objects are gained viz. achievement of the aim in this existence as well as endless merit in the next life.

[The Girnar version has—"By this practice (*i. e.*, rite of Dharma) alone heaven is attainable. What is a greater achievement than the attainment of heaven !"][1]

NOTE

1. Note the reference to *svarga*. (Compare R. E. VI, *n*. 3.)

ROCK EDICT X

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi does not consider glory or fame of great importance, but the only glory or fame that he desires is that his subjects do at present, and will in the future, obey Dharma and act in accordance to it. On this count King Devanampriya Priyadarsi desires glory or fame. Whatever exertions are made by King Devanampriya Priyadarsi are all made for the welfare of all people in the life hereafter and so that they may have little corruption. And what is sinful is corruption. Certainly it is very difficult for the poor as well as for the rich to attain freedom from corruption except without exertions, abandoning all (other aims). Assuredly this is very difficult for the rich to attain.

ROCK EDICT XI

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi thus says—there is no such gift as the gift of Dharma, no such distribution as the distribution of Dharma, and no such relationship as that established through Dharma. These comprise—proper treatment toward slaves and servants, obedience to mother and father, gifts to friends, acquaintances, relatives as well as to Sramanas and Brahmanas, and abstention from killing living beings. This should be said by a father, by a son, by a brother, by a husband, by friends and acquaintances, and even by neighbours—'this is excellent, this should be done'. He who acts like this earns happiness in this existence. Moreover such gifts of Dharma produces endless merit in the existence hereafter.

NOTE

This edict as well as Rock Edicts XII and XIII are not found at Dhauli and Jaugada where these are replaced with two other edicts which are called Separate Kalinga Edicts I and II.

ROCK EDICT XII

[1]King Devanampriya Priyadarsin honours ascetics and house-holders of all sects with gifts and reverence of various kinds. But Devanampriya does not attach so much value to gifts and reverence as to the promotion of the essence[2] (of religion) amongst all sects. This promotion of the essence can be effected by various methods. But the great root (secret) of it lies in restraint in speech so that one's own sect is not over-extolled or other sects are over-condemned unnecessarily and that praise or criticism should be moderate when necessity arises. On the other hand, other sects deserve to be duly honoured for certain reasons. The person who acts in this way promotes his own sect and at the same time benefits other sects. But if he acts otherwise he hurts his own sect and does wrong to other sects. He who with a view to glorifying his own sect extols his own sect and condemns other sects really severely injures

NOTES

1. This edict is unique. It is generally regarded as the most definite evidence of the toleration of Asoka.

2. The original is *saravirdhis.*

his own sect. Consequently restraint[3] (in speech) is praiseworthy and people should listen to the discussions of the fundamentals of the religions of other sects and follow them too. This is the wish of Devanampriya that persons of all sects should be versed in many (religions) and devoted to deeds of welfare. Those who are devoted to their respective sects should be told that Devanampriya does not consider gifts or honours so much as the promotion amongst all sects of the understanding of the essence. To this end are engaged many *Dharmamahamatras, Mahamatras in Charge of Women*[4], *Vrajabhumikas*[5], and many other officers[6]. The result of all this is the promotion of one's own sect as well as the glorification of Dharma.

NOTES

3. The original is *samjama* in Shahbazgarhi version and *samavaya* in the other versions. *Samavaya* has been translated as "concord" by Hultzsch. *Samjama* meaning restraint (in speech) appears to fit the context better.

4. The original term used is *Stryadaksa-Mahamatras.*

5. Refer *ante* p. 43.

6. Refer *ante* pp. 43—47. The original term used is *nikaya* which means a group (of officers).

For ROCK EDICT XIII refer *ante* pp. 1-16.

ROCK EDICT XIV

These edicts on Dharma were caused to be written by King Devanampriya Priyadarsi—some in abridged forms, some in medium forms and some in full length, for the whole is not suitable for every place. My dominions are vast, and much has been written and I shall cause more to be written. There are here (statements) which have been repeated several times on account of the sweetness of their sense and also in order that men should conform to them. Whatever may have been written incompletely was abridged in consideration of the locality or by the fault of the scribe.

THE SEPARATE KALINGA EDICTS

[Two versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts have been found in the modern State of Orissa—one at Dhauli in the Puri District and the other at Jaugada in the Ganjam District. In these two versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth edicts of the series have been replaced with two other edicts which are called Separate Kalinga Edicts, for these two were written specially for the people of Kalinga and for the royal officers stationed in that newly conquered territory.]

FIRST SEPARATE KALINGA EDICT

The Dhauli version reads as follows :

The Mahamatras who are the judicial officers[1] in Tosali[2] are to be told the following words of Devanampriya. I strive to carry out in practice by various means whatever I consider to be right. Giving instructions to you is considered by me to be the chief means, for, you have been placed by me in charge of many thousands of persons so that I may gain the affection of these persons. All men are my children.[3] Just as in the case of my own children I desire that they may get welfare and happiness in this and the next world so do I also desire for all. But you do not appreciate how far (reaching) is my intention. The few amongst you who appreciate it, do so only partially, and not fully. You must all pay attention to it and enforce

it completly. It may happen that in the course of the administration of justice a person is imprisoned or harshly treated (unjustly) and he may somehow succeed in getting the order of imprisonment cancelled in his case, while many other persons (sentenced similarly to imprisonment) continue to suffer. In such cases you must try to deal with them all impartially.

But on account of envy, anger, cruelty, hastiness, want of experience, laziness or fatigue an officer may fail to act impartially. So you (*i. e.*, the City Judges) must try so that you may not develop any of these defects. The secret of the complete success of an officer lies in the absence of anger and in avoiding hastiness. The officer who is weary cannot exert, but he has to move, to walk and to advance (in his work). The officer or judge who bears this in mind shall tell others—"discharge the debt that you owe to the king by following these instructions of Devanampriya."

The observance of all these (instructions) is very beneficial and their non-observance leads to great evils. For he who fails to observe these (instructions) will neither attain heaven nor please the King. For my mind cannot be pleased with one who performs his duty badly. But he who will observe these instructions will attain heaven and will also pay the debt which he owes to me, your lord.

All should listen to this edict on every day of the constellation of Tishya. In between two Tishya constellations it may be often listened to

by a single individual. In case you do so, you will be able to perform your duty.

This edict has been inscribed here for the following purpose, namely, that the judicial officers of the city may exert themselves at all times and that none should be undeservedly imprisoned or undeservedly harshly treated.

And for the purpose of finding out whether the judicial officers are attentive to this object and are acting in accordance to my instructions (recorded here) I shall send out (on tours) every five years such Mahamatras as are not harsh or fierce, but are of gentle disposition.

But from Ujjayini the Kumara[4] will send on tour every three years officers of this description for the same purpose. Similarly officers will be sent from Takshasila[5] too.

When such Mahamatras will be on tours they will without neglecting their own duties ascertain whether the (local judicial officers) were acting up to the instructions of the King.

NOTES

1. The original is *Mahamatras nagaravyava-harakas* meaning Mahamatras (refer *ante* Ch. VIII) who were in charge of the judicial administration in a city.

2. Tosali was the principal city in Kalinga (Orissa) in Asoka's time. It has been identified with Dhauli in Puri District where one version of this edict has been found. The Jaugada version of this edict is addressed to the

Mahamatras of Samapa which was another principal city of Kalinga and was situated in Ganjam district near the Jaugada rock where it has been found.

3. The original *save munise paja mama = Sarve manushyas prajas mama'* is a unique declaration by an emperor and it shows Asoka's paternal attitude to his subjects.

4. Refer *ante* Ch. VIII, p. 43.

5. Takshasila is Taxila. These references to Ujjayini and Taxila show that these were provinces which were governed by Kumaras or princes of royal blood.

SECOND SEPARATE KALINGA EDICT

Thus says Devanampriya :

By the command of the king the Mahamatras of Samapa[1] have to be told this.

I try to carry out in practice by various means whatever I consider to be right. And imparting instructions to you is considered by me to be the principal means for gaining this object.

All men are my children. Just as in the case of my own children I desire that they get welfare and happiness in this and the next world so do I also desire for all. The unconquered peoples beyond the borders of my dominions may want to know the King's intentions about them. My only intention about them is that they should know that the King desires that they may not be afraid of me (him) ; but may have trust in me (him) ; that they may obtain only happiness from me (him), not misery ; that they may learn this also that the king will forgive them what can be forgiven ; that they must be encouraged by me to practise Dharma, and that they may attain happiness in this as well as in the other world.

I instruct you for the following object, namely, that I may discharge the debt that I owe to these frontier peoples and that is my unshakable resolution and vow. Therefore you must carry out your duties by acting in this way and instill into them the confident belief that the king is to them like a

father, that he loves them like his own self and they are to the king as good as his own children.

Having instructed you and having informed you of my unshakable resolution and vow I trust that my earnest desire in this respect will be communicated to all the people of the country.

In fact you are capable of inspiring (the borderers) with confidence and of helping them to secure their welfare and happiness in this as well as the other world. And, by acting in this way, you too will attain heaven and also discharge the debt that you owe to me.

This edict has been written in order that the Mahamatras may try always to inspire the borderers with confidence and to encourage them to practise Dharma.

Therefore all of you should listen to the recital of this edict every four months on the day of the Tishya constellation. It may also be listened to between two Tishya days[2]. On suitable occasions it may also be listened to by a single individual.

If you act in this way you will be fulfilling my orders.

NOTES

1. In the Dhauli version of the edict Tosali is used. (Refer. *ante*, p. 100.)

2. Tishya is Pushya constellation. The month of Paush (December-January) is also called Tishya.

SEVEN PILLAR EDICTS

PILLAR EDICT I

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi says thus :

Twenty-six years after my coronation this edict on Dharma was caused to be written by me.

It is difficult to secure happiness in this as well as in the other world without intense devotion to Dharma, severe self-retrospection, implicit obedience, great fear of sin and great exertion. Owing however to my exertions the yearning for Dharma and devotion to Dharma have been daily increasing and will further increase.

My officers[1], high, intermediate and low, are also conforming to Dharma and practising Dharma and will thus (by their examples) encourage the wavering.

Similarly the Mahamatras of the bordering areas[2] are also acting. For this should be their rule of conduct—*viz.*, to govern according to Dharma, to judge according to Dharma, to make (the people) happy according to Dharma, and to guard (them) according to morality.

NOTES

1. The original word is *pulisa.* (Refer *ante* p. 46.)

2. The original word is *anta-mahamatras.* (Refer *ante* p. 44.)

PILLAR EDICT II

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi says thus :

Dharma is blessed, but what does Dharma comprise. It comprises freedom from sins, many meritorious deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity.[1] I have also bestowed spiritual insight[2] in many ways. I have bestowed various benefits on bipeds and quadrupeds, on birds and aquatic animals and have spared lives (to many of these). I have also performed many other virtuous deeds. I caused this edict on Dharma to be written in order that men might conform to it and that it may last for ever. And he who will act thus will do a good act.

NOTES

1. The originals used are *apasinave, bahu kayane, daya, dane, sache* and *sochaye*.

2. The original used is *chakhu-dane*.

PILLAR EDICT III

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi says thus :

A person emphasises only his meritorious deeds and says I have done this good deed. But he does not notice his evil deeds and does not say I have committed this wrong. This is really a sin. Such introspection is really very difficult. But this has to be borne in mind that fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride and envy[1] are sinful. Let me not ruin myself by reason of these passions. Special regard is to be paid to this consideration—this (act) is good for me only in this world, but that other action is conducive to my happiness in the next.

NOTE

1. The originals used are *chamdiye, nithiliye, kodhe, mane* and *isya*.

For PILLAR EDICT IV refer *ante* Ch. XIII.

PILLAR EDICT V

King Devanampriya Priyadarsi says thus :

When I had been crowned twenty-six years, the following animals were declared by me to be inviolable, namely, parrots, mainas, ruddy geese, wild geese, *nandimukhas*[1], *gelatas,* bats, queen-ants, terrapins, boneless fish, *vedaveyakas, ganga-puputakas,* skate-fish, tortoises, porcupines, squirrels, stags, bulls set at liberty, household vermins, rhinoceros, white doves, domestic doves, and all the quadrupeds which are neither useful nor edible.

She-goats, ewes and sows which are either pregnant or milch are inviolable, as well as those which are less than six months old. Cocks must not be caponed. Husks containing living animals are not to be burnt. Forests should not be burnt without a purpose or with the purpose of killing living beings. Living animals should not be fed with living animals.

Fish are not to be killed and must not be sold on the fourteenth, fifteenth and the first days of each lunar fortnight and certainly on every fast day. On these very days other varieties of animals are also not to be killed, even in elephant-forests or in the preserves of fishermen.

Bulls should not be castrated and similarly he-goats, rams, boars and whatever other animals are castrated, should not be castrated on the eighth

day of a lunar fortnight, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Tishya, of Punarvasu and on the three Chaturmasis and on occasions of festivals.

Horses should not be branded on Tishya, on Punarvasu and on Chaturmasis.

Until (I had been) anointed twenty-six years in this period the release of prisoners was ordered by me twenty-five times."[2]

NOTES

1. Names of animals which have not been identified are *in italics.*

2. This is Hultzsch's translation of the passage. This shows that the references in the edicts are to the current regnal years. (Refer *ante* Ch. I *note* 2). Jail deliveries took place on the anniversary of the day of the coronation of Asoka. Twenty-five jail-deliveries had taken place before the publication of this edict which then was issued in the twenty-sixth year of Asoka's reign. As a matter of fact in P. E. VI (refer *ante* Ch. V) Asoka says that he issued edicts for the first time when he had been anointed twelve years and that that particular edict was issued when he had been anointed twenty-six years, *i.e.* in the twenty-sixth year of his reign.

APPENDIX B

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK AND ARAMAIC TEXTS OF THE BILINGUAL ASOKAN INSCRIPTION FOUND IN AFGHANISTAN

Greek Version

"At the end of the tenth year (of his reign or from his consecration) King Piodasses (Piyadassi) has made known unto men the (doctrine of) mercy and from this moment has made men more merciful, and everything prospers over the whole earth; and the king forbears from (killing) living beings, and other men and whoever "is" the king's hunter or fisherman have forborne from hunting; and if some "were" intemperate, they have curbed their intemperance as far as was within their power; and, obedient to their father and mother and to their elders, as compared with the past, also in the future more pleasantly and better (=better and more pleasantly than in the past) shall they live, having thus informed their whole behaviour.

Aramaic Version

In year 10, *justice* (or : conversion) was made of our Lord the King Priyadarsi, according to well directed righteousness. Since a short time, he has abolished evil for all men and *all living beings* (?), and over the whole earth, and

also *everywhere* (?) (or : he benefits all men and all *living beings* (?) with *happiness,* and over the whole earth, and with *joy*). And also those who *are in charge* (?) of (providing) food for Our Lord the King are killing little; this (happens) in order that all the men (who are) hunters and fishers may see those men *proclaiming* thus : 'those who are *evil-minded* (?), they kill ; he who is *pious* and *obedient* to his mother and father and the *elder* people, as they have warned him, he will strongly enhance good luck and unimpeachability by everybody for everybody, with enhancement and addition.' (*Serie Orientale Roma,* XXI, pp. 33—34).

NOTE

This bi-lingual edict of Asoka is of great significance for several reasons. First, its find-spot near Kandahar definitely proves that Afghanistan as far as the Kandahar region lay within the Asokan Empire. Secondly, it shows that such a large number of Greeks were his subjects that he felt it his duty to issue an edict in Greek language for their benefit. Thirdly, the Aramaic version of this edict suggests that the Kambojas who were probably an Aramaic-speaking people and who are coupled in Asokan Edicts (*e. g.*, in R. E. V & XII) with the Greeks, were also resident in the region of Kandahar. Fourthly, the statement in the Greek version that "at the end of the tenth year (of his reign) king Piyadassi has made known unto men the doctrine of mercy" suggests that Asoka began his evangelical activities two years before he published his first inscription twelve years after his coronation, as he states in Pillar Edict VI. Lastly, if the English rendering of the first sentence of the Aramaic version of the Edict as made by

Dr. Umberto Scerrato and as is given above, is correct it will require important modification of the idea which had so long been held that Asoka was converted to Buddhism immediately after the conquest of Kalinga eight years after his coronation. But the alternative reading (*i.e.*, conversion) of the fourth word of the Aramaic version of the edict cannot be accepted in view of the definite statements in Rock Edict XIII on which the current theory is based. (Refer *ante* R. E. XIII, Section 3 & M.R.E. I, *n*. 1.)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. T. G.	...	Asoka Text and Glossary.
C. E. ...	...	Cave Edict.
CHI ...	...	Cambridge History of India.
EHI ...	...	Early History of India.
EI ...	...	Epigraphia Indica.
Hult. CII	...	Hultzsch's Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
IA ...	...	Indian Antiquary.
JASB	...	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
M. P. E.	...	Minor Pillar Edict.
M. R. E.	...	Minor Rock Edict.
N. P. E.	...	Nigliva Pillar Edict.
N. S. E.	...	Nigali Sagar Edict.
O. H. I.	...	The Oxford History of India.
P. E. ...	...	Pillar Edict.
Pol. Hist.	...	Political History of Ancient India.
R. E. ...	...	Rock Edict.

INDEX

Agents, a class of officers, 46, 67, 71.

Ajivika, a religious sect, 40.

Alikasuddara, a Greek prince, 10.

Andhras, a tribe under Asoka, 15-16.

Antikini, a Greek king, 10.

Atavi, 9.

Aryaputra, a provincial governor, 43

Asoka : sources of knowledge of, x ; career acc. to edicts, xvi ; conquers Kalinga, 1 ; his royal title, 5 ; identification of, 6 ; date of accession of, 10-11, 23-24, arguments against war, 8 ; conversion of, 8, 19 ; boundaries of the empire of, 9-10 ; Greek contemporaries of, 10-11, activities in Greek countries of, 11-14 ; southern borderers of, 14 ; tribal peoples in the empire of. 14-16 ; religion of, 20-22 ; date of conversion of, 19-20 ; mingles gods with men, 22-28 ; mentioned by name in edict, 26-27, confesses faith in Buddhism, recommends seven Buddhist texts, 28-30 ; king of, Magadha, 27 ; visits Bodh-Gaya, 31 ; tours of Dharma of, 31-32 ; two periods of life of, 32 ; first issues edicts, 33 ; holds public shows of edifying objects, 37; orders officials to go on tours, 42 ; his officials, 43ff ; his ministers and Council, 47-48 ; appoints *Dharma-mahamatras*, 49 ; brothers and sisters of, 50, 53-54, 74 ; enlarges stupa of Konakamana, 55 ; visits Lumbini, 58 ; honours Buddha's birthplace, 58 ; special instructions to *Rajukas*, 61 ; his measures for the promotion of Dharma and for the benefit of men and beasts, 71-73 ; queens and sons of, 76 ; holds meeting of Buddhist Church Council, 78 ; condemns schismatics, 79-81 ; circulates Sarnath edict, 79, 82.

Assam, outside Asoka's empire, 10.

Ayukta, a class of officers, 47.

Bairat, xiii.

Barabar Hills, location of, 41 ; edicts in, 40-41, 57.

Bengal, a part of the Empire, 10.

Bhatakas, paid servants. 8-9.

Bhojas, a tribal people, 15-16.

Birds and beasts, list of prohibited, 75.

Brahmanas, mentioned with Sramanas, 2, 31, 32, 37, 42, 50 ; special rights of, 64 ; their attitude towards Asoka, 65.

Brahmagiri, xiii.

Brahmi script, nature and decipherment of, xiv.

Buddha, Asoka confesses faith in, 27,

Buddha-Sakya, 25.

Choda, 4, 14.

Council, powers of, 47-48.

Church Council, sessions of, 78, 80-81.

Danda-samata, meaning of, 63-65.

Dasas, slaves, 8.

Delhi, pillars at, xiii.

Devanampriya Priyadarshin. meaning of, 5-6, 32.

Dharma, 8 ; conquest by, 9 ; as preached by Asoka, 20-22 ; pillars of, 71 ; measures for the promotion of, 72 ; positive and negative constituents of, 74-75.

Dharma-lipi, 16.

Dharma-mahamatras, appointment of 49, 50 ; functions of, 50-51 ; significance of, 52.

Dharmasamgiti, a Church Council meeting, 80.

Dhauli, xii, 54.

Duta, 16, 46.

Edicts classification of, xi-xiii ; geographical distribution of, xi-xiii ; Separate Kalinga Edicts, xii ; App. A., scripts of, xiv ; decipherment of, xv ; R. E. xiii, 1-5 ; system of dating in, 6-7 ; Rupnath, 17 ; Maski, 25 ; Calcutta Bairat, 27 ; Bhabru, 27 ; R. E. VIII, 30 ; P. E. VI., 33 ; first issued, 33 ; chronology of, 34-36 ; R. E. IV, 37-39 ; C. I., 40, 57 ; R. E. III, 42 ; R. E. V, 49 ; Nigali Sagar, 55 ; Rummindei,

58-60 ; P. E. IV ; 61 ; P. E. VII, 66 ; Delhi-Topra, 66 ; P. E. V., 68 ; Queen's, 70 ; Kausambi P. E., 75 ; Samchi P. E., 78 ; Sarnath P. E., 77ff ; Pul-i-Duranta, vi ; Kandahar, App. B.

Gandharas, 15, 50.

Girnar, xii.

Gosala, founder of the Ajivikas, 40.

Greek contemporaries, 10-11.

Hiuan Tsang, cited, xii, 10.

Ibhyas, 50.

It-sing, cited, 22.

Inscriptions (See Edicts).

Jambudvipa, 17, 22.

Jaugada, xii, App. A.

Jatinga-Rameswara, xiii.

Kalinga, 17.

Kalsi, xii.

Kambojas, 15, 50, App. B.

Kaluvaki, Asoka's second queen, 76-77

Karanaka, a class of officers, 47

Kausambi, xi ; edict of and its date, 78, 80.

Keralaputra, 14.

Kharoshthi, a script, xv.

Khalatika Hill, 57.

Konokamana, 55

Kumaras, provincial governors, 43.

Lajuka (see Rajuka).

Lauriya-Araraj and L.-Nandangarh, xiii.

Lumbini (Lummini), Buddha's birth-place, 58-59.

Lipikara, a scribe, 46.

Maka, a Greek prince, 4, 11.

Mahamatras, functions and status of, 44, 51-53, 73-74.

Mahakashyapa, 80.

Mansehra, xii.

Maski, xii ; edict at, 25 ff.

Nabhakas and Nabhitis, 14-15.

Nirgranthas, a Jain sect, 69.

Nirvana, date of, in relation to Asokan chronology, 23-24 ;

Officers of Asoka, 43-47

Parisha (King's Council), 47-48.

Pashamda, 36.

Pandya, 4, 14.

Pativedaka, a class of officers, 46.

Pitinika, 14-15.

Pradesika, a class of officers, 40 ; functions and status of, 44-45.

Prinsep, J., deciphers edicts, xii, 66.

Pulida, a tribe, 4, 16.

Purusha (or *Pulisha*), a class of officers, 46, 67, 71.

Rajuka, functions and status of, 45, 59, 68, 67.

Rampurva, xi.

Rummindei, location of, 58 ; pillar at, 58 ff.

Rupnath, xii ; edict, 17 ff.

Sakya, 17, 18-19.

Samgha, 17, 18, 22, 25, 26, 69, 79 ; question of division in, 80-81.

Sahasram, xii.

Sambodhi, 31, 32.

Satiyaputra, 14.

Sectarian edicts, 27.

Shahbazgarhi, xii.

Sopara, xii.

Sramanas, mentioned with Brahmanas, 2, 31, 32, 37, 42, 50.

Tamraparni, 4, 14.

Tivara (or Tivala), son of Kaluvaki, 76-77.

Tri-ratna, 28-29.

Turamaya, ruler of Egypt, 4, 10.

Upagupta, 59.

Vachabhumika, a class of officers, 46.

Vyavahara-samata, meaning of, 63, 65.

Yerragudi, xiii.

Yojana, 10.

Yona, 4, 9, 15, 50.

Yuktas, functions and status of, 45-46.